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[Gov. Fallin Delivers 2017 State of the State Address](#)

02/06/2017 01:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today delivered the annual State of the State Address in front of a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature. In it, Fallin focused on the urgent need to improve the state’s budgeting process to ensure that legislators can adequately fund priority goals related to education, public safety, health and the state’s infrastructure needs. Her State of the State Address can be found

[State of Oklahoma Requests Major Disaster Declaration for January Ice Storm](#)

02/02/2017 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government for 10 counties impacted by the Jan. 13-16 ice storm.

If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal, and costs associated with responding to the storm.

The counties are: **Beaver, Beckham, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, Roger Mills, Texas, Woods and Woodward.**

[Okla. Justice Reform Task Force Releases Recommendations to Protect Public Safety, Control Spending](#)

02/02/2017 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the final findings and recommendations from the Oklahoma Justice Reform Task Force:

“Oklahoma is in a crisis as our current prison population greatly exceeds capacity, and we have the second-highest imprisonment rate in the country, with the highest rate for women. Without change, our prison population will increase by 25 percent, and will require three more prisons to be built or contracted.

“To address this, in August I charged the Oklahoma Justice Reform Task Force to perform a comprehensive review of Oklahoma’s criminal justice system and develop data-driven recommendations that will increase public safety by reducing recidivism, holding offenders accountable, and controlling the state’s skyrocketing corrections costs.

“Since then, the members of the task force have spent countless hours studying data to craft fact-based

State Charitable Campaign Surpasses Goal

01/27/2017 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs Executive Director Steve Buck today announced the State Charitable Campaign (SCC) surpassed its 2016 donation goal by raising \$516,615 to benefit SCC member charities.

Within the Oklahoma City metro area, donations among state staff reached \$451,815, said Buck, 2016 SCC chairman.

The SCC offers an efficient, accountable way for state employees to contribute to more than 200 local, statewide and international charities.

The charities support a variety of services, including feeding the hungry, education

Gov. Fallin Names Two to Serve on Oklahoma Water Resources Board

01/26/2017 05:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today named Charles ‘Chuck’ Darby, of Broken Bow, and Rob Stallings, of Enid, to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Both appointments still must be confirmed by the Senate when it convenes this year. The governor plans to soon fill a third vacancy, from the northeast part of the state.

Darby would succeed Richard Sevenoaks, whose term expired. Darby’s term would expire in May 2023.

Stallings would

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Passing of Oklahoma Journalist Frosty Troy

01/19/2017 06:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the passing of Frosty Troy, who was a longtime editor of the Oklahoma Observer and a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame:

“Frosty Troy was a diligent journalist who covered the state Capitol for nearly 40 years, reporting on governors, lawmakers and state officials. I first met him 26 years ago as a young legislator. My thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family.”

New Report Shows Major Progress In Bringing High-Speed Internet to More Schools & Students

01/19/2017 10:30 AM CST

EducationSuperHighway’s Second Annual “State of the States” Report Finds 91 Percent of Oklahoma School Districts Now Meet Minimum Connectivity Goal; Up from 85 Percent in 2015

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin today expressed appreciation for ongoing efforts to bring high-speed Internet to more schools and students statewide as part of her *Oklahoma Connect and Learning Initiative*. The *Oklahoma Connect and Learn Initiative* is part of the Oklahoma Works strategic plan.

The Initiative leadership team consists of members from the Governor’s Office, Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma Corporation Commission, and Office of Management and Enterprise Services. The initiative is coordinated through a national policy academy hosted by the National Governors Association and EducationSuperHighway, a national non-profit focused on upgrading the

Gov. Fallin Comments on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

01/16/2017 07:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding Martin Luther King Jr. Day:

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached a message of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity that is just as relevant today as it was when he lived. He was a patriot who believed in the great potential of our country and its message of freedom and equality of opportunity. I encourage all Oklahomans to join me in celebrating the spirit of brotherhood and love that Dr. King embraced.”

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, January 16. The

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Approaching Storms

01/12/2017 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to severe winter weather predicted for the state.

Because the weather event is expected to include dangerous road conditions and power outages, emergency management authorities recommended issuing this declaration before the full brunt of the storms arrive.

Winter storms, snow, freezing rain, ice, severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds and flooding may impact different parts of the state during the next two or three days.

Gov. Fallin Announces Grant to Improve Education for Young People

01/11/2017 12:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked JPMorgan Chase & Co. and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for awarding Oklahoma a grant that will complement her existing Oklahoma Works Initiative goal to create a future-ready workforce. The New Skills For Youth grant will provide Oklahoma with \$2 million over three years to help improve access to skills-based education and training for high-skill, well-paying careers.

“A postsecondary degree, credential or certificate is the new minimum for success in the workforce,” said Fallin. “The New Skills for Youth Grant builds on my Oklahoma Works Initiative to align education to the needs of the workforce. Through increased cooperation between

The Oklahoman Editorial: Oklahoma Can't Afford to Stand Pat and Hope to Fill Jobs Pipeline

01/06/2017 12:00 PM CST

By [The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#) Published: January 5, 2017

GOV. Mary Fallin is setting the bar mighty high in her effort to fit more Oklahomans for the workforce of

Gov. Fallin Appoints Karen Youngblood to Board of Juvenile Affairs

01/04/2017 01:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Karen Youngblood to fill an unexpired term on the Board of Juvenile Affairs.

Youngblood succeeds Wendell Hixson, who resigned. She will serve the remainder of Hixson’s term, which expires in July 2018, representing Congressional District 3 with experience in education. She can begin serving immediately on the seven-member board, which is the governing body for the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). Her appointment still must be confirmed by the Senate when it convenes this year.

Youngblood, of Yukon, is

Oklahoma Receives REAL ID Extension through June 2017

01/03/2017 06:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin along with legislative leaders today announced that Oklahoma has received an extension through June 6, 2017, to meet the requirements in the REAL ID Act. But the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security (DHS) warned that failure for the state to act during the 2017 legislative session on legislation committing Oklahoma to all the REAL ID requirements could result in the denial of future extension requests.

Without the extension, federal agencies later this month would have been prohibited from accepting Oklahoma driver's licenses and identification cards, meaning those without identification that complies with the REAL ID Act won't be able to enter a federal building, military base or

Gov. Fallin Comments on Election of House Speaker, Senate President Pro Tem

01/03/2017 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today made the following statements after Rep. Charles McCall was formally elected speaker of the House of Representatives and Sen. Mike Schulz was formally elected president pro tem of the Senate:

“I am confident Charles McCall will be an effective and hard-working speaker of the House of Representatives. I look forward to working with him as we pursue policies to help create jobs and make state government more efficient.

“Mike Schulz is a dedicated leader who previously earned the respect of his fellow senators as majority floor leader. I look

Gov. Fallin Establishes Goal to Increase Post-secondary Education, Training Attainment

12/29/2016 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced a goal to increase post-secondary education and training attainment for Oklahomans. The goal, named Launch Oklahoma, is for 70 percent of Oklahoma’s residents, age 25-64, to complete a postsecondary degree, certificate or credential by the year 2025. About 40 percent of the state’s residents now have that level of education or training.*

“Projections show that in 2025, 77 percent of the state’s new labor market will require greater than a high school diploma, highlighting the critical need for higher education,” said Fallin, who authorized Launch Oklahoma in

Gov. Fallin Statement on Christmas

12/23/2016 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season:

“This is my favorite time of year. It’s a chance to reflect upon the blessings we have received and to spend time with family, loved ones and friends. In this busy holiday season, we should all take a moment to embrace the true meaning of Christmas and offer goodwill to all.

“Let us not forget the men and women in uniform who risk their lives to protect our freedoms and families. Holiday separations are always difficult, not only for them but also for their families.

“On behalf of myself, the First Gentleman and my entire family, I wish all a very Merry Christmas and for a New Year filled with blessings and joy.”

Gov. Fallin Applauds Signing of Water Infrastructure Bill into Law

12/20/2016 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the President signed into law the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. Among other items, the WIIN Act includes the water agreement between Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, and the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations.

“I am thrilled this critically important piece of legislation has become law. Among many things helpful to Oklahoma, the WIIN Act includes the water rights agreement reached this past summer with the state of Oklahoma, the city of Oklahoma City, and the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations. Now, thanks to the hard work of Oklahoma’s congressional delegation and the visionary leadership of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations and Oklahoma City, existing uses of water remain secure, at the same time that certainty for future development is provided.

“I want to particularly recognize the excellent legal work and the leadership of Attorney

Gov. Fallin Calls Special Election for State House District 28 Seat

12/16/2016 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today ordered a special election to fill the vacancy in Oklahoma House District 28 caused by the irrevocable resignation of Rep. Tom Newell. His resignation will become effective Jan. 1, 2017.

The filing period for the special election is Jan. 9, 10 and 11. The special primary election is set for March 7 and special general election is scheduled for May 9.

In the event a special primary election is not necessary, the special general election will be March 7.

Newell, of

Gov. Fallin's Feeding Oklahoma Drive Exceeds Goal

12/15/2016 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced her seventh annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive, which ran Oct. 1 through 31, exceeded its goal of raising 2 million meals. In total, the drive raised \$303,991 in donations and 1,327,766 pounds of food, which will provide 2,626,428 meals for Oklahomans struggling with hunger.

“I want to thank the many generous Oklahomans who stepped up and donated to this year’s Feeding Oklahoma Drive,” Fallin said. “Because of your incredible generosity, we will provide meals to our hungry neighbors across the state. Just because the drive has ended, though, and we have met our goal, please do not forget the continued importance of giving this holiday

Gov. Fallin Discusses Trip to Middle East

12/14/2016 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today discussed her trip last week to visit Oklahoma National Guard troops in the Middle East. Governor Fallin was one of three governors to take part in the trip arranged by the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department. She was joined by Major General Robbie Asher, who is the Oklahoma Adjutant General, commanding the Oklahoma Army and Air National Guard.

As noted by the Pentagon, the 28th Secretary of Defense-sponsored Governor Delegation (GOVDEL) traveled to Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, and Germany to visit forward-deployed National Guard and Reserve Service Members and deployed home-state constituents, as well as to receive briefings from European Command (EUCOM) and Central Command (CENTCOM) leaders.

“It was a privilege to participate in this trip organized by the Department of Defense. The trip was an incredible experience, and really brought to life the risks and sacrifices that our men and

Gov. Fallin Praises Justice Reform Task Force's Work toward Significant Proposal

12/13/2016 05:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she will extend the deadline for her justice reform task force to provide more time to strengthen its proposals.

The governor will modify an executive order that had previously called for the Oklahoma Justice Reform Task Force’s work to be complete by Thursday, Dec. 15.

“To deliver the type of significant improvement Oklahoma needs, I am asking the task force to take the achievable, responsible ideas it already has a step further,” said Fallin. “The task force already has ways to save thousands of prison beds while

Gov. Fallin Applauds Final Passage of Water Infrastructure Act in Congress

12/10/2016 11:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the U.S. Senate voted 78-21 to pass the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. The bill now moves to the president for his approval. Among other items, the WIIN Act includes the water agreement between Oklahoma, Oklahoma City and the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations.

“I applaud the U.S. Senate for passing the WIIN Act with strong, bipartisan support, and am hopeful it soon will become law. I want to especially acknowledge the hard work of Oklahoma’s congressional delegation in

Gov. Fallin Statement on Appointment of Attorney General Scott Pruitt to EPA Post

12/08/2016 06:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after President-elect Donald Trump announced his intent to nominate Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency:

“Attorney General Scott Pruitt is a tireless advocate of the precious balance of power between state and federal governments. In his nearly six years as attorney general, he led the charge to combat the ever-increasing overreach of the Obama administration. I applaud President-elect Trump’s appointment of Scott Pruitt as head of the EPA. He will ensure

Gov. Fallin Forms Task Force to Review Occupational Licensing Requirements

12/06/2016 04:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the formation of a task force to perform a comprehensive review of occupational licensing in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Occupational Licensing Task Force will provide recommendations to the governor to remove unnecessary or burdensome regulations that are a barrier to potential workers.

“Occupational licensing often can be overly burdensome, which can hinder a person from earning a living and providing for their family,” said Fallin. “These unnecessary or outdated barriers make it harder for many Oklahomans, particularly those who may not have completed a formal education as well as some minorities. This can help them

Gov. Fallin Names Jana Miller to Communications Office

12/05/2016 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Jana Miller, a writer and communications strategist, has joined her staff as senior adviser on communications. Miller began her duties last month, joining Communications Director Michael McNutt.

Miller spent more than a decade working in U.S. politics, as speechwriter, communications director, and senior adviser for several prominent national politicians, including members of leadership on both the House and Senate sides of the U.S. Congress. These members include former Speaker of the U.S. House Newt Gingrich, former Vice Chair of the U.S. House Republican Conference Tillie Fowler (Fla.), former Vice Chair of the U.S. Senate Republican Conference Kay Bailey Hutchison (Texas), and former U.S. Senator Sam Brownback (Kan.). She is

Gov. Fallin Announces Trip to Visit Troops

12/05/2016 12:30 PM CST

ARLINGTON, VA – Governor Mary Fallin announced today from the Pentagon that she is traveling this week to the Middle East to visit with American troops:

“I am always impressed and inspired by our men and women in uniform. The risks they take and the sacrifices they make are unfathomable to most of us. Yet they remain committed to the mission command, and motivated to fight for our nation’s freedom.

“My deepest gratitude to their families and loved ones for their sacrifices, and to the businesses for whom these National Guard members work. Your support and encouragement is critical to both the success of this mission and these men and

Gov. Fallin Statement on Extension of InsureOK

12/02/2016 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the extension of Insure Oklahoma (InsureOK) for one additional year from December 31, 2016 to December 31, 2017:

“I am pleased to announce that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have granted my request for an extension of our 1115 Medicaid Waiver for the Insure Oklahoma program. This is the fourth time we have been granted an extension of this public-private partnership, once again demonstrating that successful innovations and solutions happen at the state level, especially here in Oklahoma.

“Insure Oklahoma is a critically important piece of the health insurance puzzle in

Oklahoma Awarded National Governors Association Assistance

12/02/2016 08:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the National Governors Association (NGA) has chosen Oklahoma as one of two states to receive technical assistance regarding using existing Medicaid funds to meet state workforce requirements in underserved areas of the state.

“I am thrilled that the NGA has chosen to help Oklahoma meet its health care workforce needs. One of my top priorities as Governor has been addressing the workforce crisis in Oklahoma, through my initiative, Oklahoma Works. This support from the NGA dovetails perfectly with the goals of my Administration to ensure all Oklahomans have the skills and education necessary to have rewarding careers and achieve the American Dream,” noted Governor Fallin.

Gov. Fallin Statement on OPEC Agreement

12/01/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the oil production agreement reached by OPEC:

“The news that OPEC has finally reached an agreement to reduce oil production for the first time since 2008 is welcome here in Oklahoma. Our oil and gas producers and the thousands of Americans they employ have done a great job of persevering during difficult times. Thanks to their hard work, innovations and efficiencies, America is better positioned to compete and win in the world energy market. For our national security and economy, our country must continue on a path to becoming energy independent.”

Gov. Mary Fallin Statement on Thanksgiving

11/23/2016 04:15 PM CST

November 23, 2016

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Thanksgiving

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on Thanksgiving:

“The Thanksgiving after a presidential election is a good time to be reminded of the origins of this celebration for our great nation. In 1789, our first President, George Washington, proclaimed a day “to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then

Gov. Fallin, Sup't. Hofmeister to Host Students for Christmas Tree Lighting

11/23/2016 04:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin and Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister will be joined next week by schoolchildren from across the state for the lighting of the Capitol Christmas tree.

The lighting ceremony is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29, on the south steps of the Capitol. The governor will give brief remarks before the 30-foot artificial Christmas tree is lit. The tree, a replica of a Douglas fir, has more than 2,500 energy-saving LED lights.

This year's emcee is Bobbie Miller. The event is sponsored by McDonald's, Manhattan Construction and Weyerhaeuser Co. Foundation.

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Death of Larry Derryberry

11/21/2016 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the death of former Oklahoma Attorney General Larry Derryberry:

“Larry Derryberry was an extraordinarily kind and intelligent man, who dedicated his life to the people of Oklahoma. His death is a huge loss.

“I was honored to call him my friend, and grateful for his advice and his service over the years. Whether as Oklahoma attorney general or as a member of the House, Larry gave his all to our state.

Gov. Fallin Statement on Legislators Taking Their Oaths of Office

11/16/2016 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement congratulating newly elected and returning legislators of the 56th Legislature on taking their oaths of office:

“Congratulations to the returning and newly elected members of the Oklahoma Senate and House of Representatives on taking their official oaths of office. I look forward to working with them as we work to make Oklahoma a stronger, more prosperous state for our residents to live, work and raise a family.

Oklahoma Is Making Progress in Recruiting, Retaining Great Foster Parents

11/14/2016 02:00 PM CST

This month marks a special anniversary. It’s been a year since I launched an initiative called Oklahoma Fosters, which renewed our efforts to find foster families for the hundreds of children in state custody and coming into state custody.

Its goal, simply put, is to recruit foster families.

There are nearly 9,800 children in state custody, and we desperately need the help of ALL Oklahomans.

Oklahoma Fosters is a statewide initiative uniting state, tribal

Gov. Fallin Looks Forward to Offering Comprehensive Justice Reform Policies After Passage of SQ 780

11/11/2016 04:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said that Oklahoma voters made it clear this week they want the state to redirect how it deals with drug addiction and the criminal justice system. Nearly 60 percent (58.2 percent) of voters on Tuesday voted for State Question 780, which would reduce the penalties for some nonviolent crimes.

"The people of Oklahoma have decided that we can no longer afford to fill our prisons with individuals suffering from addiction; that strategy has been far too costly in dollars and in lives," said Fallin. "This historic vote reflects a fundamental change in the way our state understands and treats drug addiction, a disease that has destroyed too many of our families. This is a great

Gov. Fallin Veterans Day Statement

11/11/2016 07:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement concerning Veterans Day:

“We owe our veterans and active-duty military men and women a huge debt for their courage and sacrifice. They protect our freedoms and keep us safe, and they do so at a great cost to themselves and their families.

“I’m asking all Oklahomans to join me in thanking our veterans for everything they have done for this country and for

The Fix: Gov. Fallin on How To Solve Oklahoma's Prescription Drug Epidemic

11/10/2016 04:30 PM CST

By John Lavitt 11/08/16

As communities throughout the country struggle to find solutions for prescription drug misuse and growing opioid-related overdoses, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin has been one of the most proactive Republican leaders to address the crisis in her state. Governor Fallin has consistently championed drug courts and alternative sentencing for nonviolent drug offenders, such as "Women in Recovery," a diversion program that provides services and treatment for Tulsa women with alcohol and drug addictions. She has also worked to repeal mandatory minimum sentences for first and second drug offenses and reduce maximum

Statement by Gov. Fallin on Action Taken by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

11/08/2016 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on action taken by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission in response to the 5.0 magnitude earthquake Sunday evening in the Cushing area:

“I support the quick action taken today by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, which regulates the oil and gas industry in our state, as it worked closely with state researchers at the Oklahoma Geological Survey to put in place mandatory reductions in activity impacting induced seismicity. Two years ago, we established the coordinating council on seismicity. Regulators

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency for Payne County after Earthquake

11/08/2016 12:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has declared a state of emergency for Payne County due to a magnitude 5.0 earthquake that occurred Sunday evening near the city of Cushing.

The earthquake was felt in multiple states and has resulted in damage to numerous buildings in downtown Cushing. Damage assessments are ongoing.

Fallin and state emergency management officials are asking residents to submit photos of earthquake damage to their homes or businesses through the OK Emergency mobile application. The OK Emergency app is available for

Gov. Fallin Concludes Feeding Oklahoma Drive

11/01/2016 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin on Monday successfully concluded her seventh annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive. The month-long drive benefitted the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma and their partner agencies across the state.

“As governor of the great state of Oklahoma, I am always proud of how generous our citizens can be,” said Fallin. “That generosity is never more evident than when neighbors help neighbors; that’s what you’ve done by supporting my Feeding Oklahoma Drive. You have helped put food on the table for thousands of hungry Oklahomans and I am so grateful. Thank you for joining me, and the Oklahoma food banks, in fighting hunger and feeding

Statement by Gov. Fallin on the Release of the A-F School Grades

10/28/2016 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the Release of the A-F school grades:

“Oklahoma’s A-F grading system is an important measure of school performance for parents as well as school administrators and teachers. The A-F school grades provide a mechanism for teachers and administrators to compare their schools with others, while providing insight on how they can improve. The grades also let parents know how the schools are performing, while showing other school patrons what supports are needed to help their schools

Chickasaw Nation to Reestablish Tourism Destination at Lake Texoma

10/27/2016 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - The state of Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation today announced plans to develop a resort hotel and other amenities at Lake Texoma in southeastern Oklahoma.

The initial plans call for the Chickasaw Nation to construct a three-story hotel, a restaurant and gift shop, a casino featuring up to 300 electronic games and as many as 10 lakefront fishing/boating cottages, Chickasaw Governor Bill Anoatubby said. The project covers 50 acres of lakefront property, overlooking Lake Texoma and the historic Roosevelt Bridge. It also involves about 11.5 acres of land acquired by the Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) from the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation.

[The Washington Post: Millions of Americans Have Mental Problems That Don't Get Treated, Report Say](#)

10/26/2016 04:00 PM CDT

Mental Health America just released its [annual assessment](#) of Americans with mental illness, the treatment they receive and the resources available to them — and the conclusions are sobering: Twenty percent of adults (43.7

[Gov. Fallin Applauds Development of 'One-Stop Shop' Portal for Aging and Disability Resources](#)

10/24/2016 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – A “one-stop shop” web portal is being developed to serve Oklahomans who are aging or who have a disability.

Funding for the new informational web portal has been approved by the Oklahoma Health and Human Services (HHS) Cabinet Committee, Deliver Interoperable Solution Components Utilizing Shared Services (DISCUSS).

The portal will be a “one-stop shop” to provide individuals and families with information about available community, government resources and services, including Medicaid services. Individuals, state agency personnel, community groups, and

[The Oklahoman Editorial: Data Show Oklahoma's A-F School Grades Have A Positive Effect](#)

10/19/2016 01:15 PM CDT

By **[The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#)** Published: October 19, 2016

IN the years since Oklahoma began issuing A-F letter grades to individual schools, the annual response from many school leaders has been predictable. Those receiving

an A or B grade typically don't complain. Those getting a D or F complain that the grading system is flawed.

Yet there's a clear correlation between A-F grading and statewide improvement in student learning, as highlighted at a recent study conducted by the state House Common Education Committee.

Gov. Fallin Applauds Sublease Agreement for New Medical Examiner's Office Building

10/13/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - After nearly a decade of relocation efforts, the Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) will have a new home.

The board of directors for the chief medical examiner's office on Monday approved a sublease agreement to move into the first and second floors of the 921 Building, 921 N.E. 23rd St. in Oklahoma City. The OCME lost accreditation with the National Association of Medical Examiners in 2009 after being cited for deficiencies in its facilities.

"This agreement allows the state medical examiner's office to move into a new facility and out of its

Gov. Fallin Statement on Appointment of Julie Cunningham as Interim Director of Water Board

10/13/2016 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement after the Oklahoma Water Resources Board appointed Julie Cunningham as interim executive director:

"I applaud the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's decision to name Julie Cunningham as interim executive director of the agency. Julie is an experienced water professional who will continue to lead the agency after J.D. Strong's departure. She brings great insight from working within every division of the agency during her 22-year career with the agency. She has been serving as the chief of planning and

Gov. Fallin Announces Cabinet, Senior Staff Changes

10/10/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced a series of changes to her Cabinet and senior staff designed to ensure continued legislative success for the next two years while sustaining important initiatives enacted during her time in office.

“My team and I have accomplished a lot in the past six years, and we have every intention of being as productive as possible in our remaining two years,” said Fallin. “Each of these members of our team will continue to do amazing work for Oklahoma just as they have throughout their impressive careers. I thank each of them for all they have done to date and am thrilled they are all stepping up to fill these important roles serving our great state.”

Gov. Fallin: It's Not Too Late to Fight Hunger in Oklahoma

10/10/2016 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – To help fight hunger this holiday season, Governor Mary Fallin today encouraged Oklahomans to join her seventh annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive during the month of October. Oklahoma is consistently one of the hungriest states in the nation.

“There’s still time to participate in my Feeding Oklahoma Drive,” said Fallin. “The drive doesn’t end until October 31, so you can still host a food drive or make a donation to help us meet our goal of providing 2 million meals for our hungry Oklahoma neighbors.”

The month-long food drive

Gov. Fallin Hosts Oklahoma Works Summit

10/07/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin on Thursday hosted the Oklahoma Works Summit at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City. Nearly 250 business and education leaders attended the event, which focused on the governor’s Oklahoma Works initiative, launched in 2015, to ensure students are being educated for the high-quality, high-paying jobs the state wants to retain and attract.

“Oklahoma must concentrate on steering students into critical occupations, or those careers where the demand for workers is strongest,” Fallin said

The governor outlined a plan to

Gov. Fallin Applauds UCO for Earning National Recognition for Student Engagement

10/04/2016 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today complimented the administration of the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) being nationally recognized for helping their students connect with each other, their community and the world around them.

The Edmond university tied for sixth in a Top 10 list compiled by the Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Ranking.

“It’s pleasing to see UCO is considered among the best in the nation at encouraging critical thinking and helping students apply learning to their community and real-life situations,” said Fallin.

Gov. Fallin Kicks Off Feeding Oklahoma Drive Saturday

09/29/2016 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin’s seventh annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive kicks off on Saturday, October 1, with the goal of raising 2 million meals to help feed hungry families, children and seniors. The month-long food drive benefits the [Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma](#), the

Gov. Fallin to Take Part in Bring Small Business Back Event in Oklahoma City

09/28/2016 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will be among the speakers at a Bring Small Business Back event this week in Oklahoma City. The event is scheduled from 9:30 until 11 a.m. Friday at the student center building on the Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City campus, 900 N. Portland Ave.

The Job Creators Network (JCN) is hosting the

Gov. Fallin Names Businessman to Join Oklahoma Works Leadership Team

09/27/2016 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Mike Fuller, general manager at American Castings in Pryor, has been named a regional leader to support the “[Oklahoma Works](#)” education, workforce and job creation initiative.

Fuller will lead the Key Economic Network (KEN) that covers the northeast region of Oklahoma. To address regional workforce needs, Oklahoma Works

Gov. Fallin Statement on Prosecutors' Decision to Charge Tulsa Police Officer with Manslaughter

09/22/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released this statement on the decision by Tulsa County prosecutors to charge Tulsa police officer Betty Shelby with first-degree manslaughter in the Sept. 16 shooting death of Terence Crutcher:

“I pray this decision provides some peace to the Crutcher family and the people of Tulsa, but we must remain patient as the case works its way through the justice system, where a jury likely will be asked to decide whether officer Betty Shelby is guilty of the crime. And we must remember that in our justice system, officer Shelby is innocent until proven guilty.

Gov. Fallin Appoints Charles "Chuck" Sullivan as District Attorney for Pittsburg, Haskell Counties

09/16/2016 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Charles “Chuck” Sullivan as district attorney for Pittsburg and Haskell counties. He will replace Farley Ward, who is retiring Sept. 30.

Sullivan, of McAlester, will serve as district attorney for the remainder of Ward’s term, which expires in January 2019.

“Chuck Sullivan has an array of legal experience that gives him a unique perspective,” said Fallin. “I know he will serve the people of Pittsburg and Haskell counties well as district attorney.”

Ward, elected district attorney in 2010, recommended Sullivan, who currently serves as his top assistant, to replace him.

Previously, Sullivan worked in insurance defense with the Steidley and Neal law firm in McAlester and for the Tulsa County public defender’s office.

Sullivan earned his law degree from the University of Tulsa. He and his wife, Kristin, live in

Gov. Fallin Appoints District Judge for Comanche County

09/16/2016 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Irma J. Newburn as district judge for Comanche County. She is replacing Keith B. Aycock, who retired July 1.

Newburn, of Lawton, serves as first district attorney in Comanche County. She is also a member of the Oklahoma Board of Corrections. Fallin appointed her to the corrections board in February 2015.

Newburn has worked in the Comanche County district attorney’s office since 2008. Before that, she worked one year for a private law firm in Lawton. She also worked as a deputy court clerk for the city of Lawton and as a clerk for the Lawton Police Department.

“Irma Newburn is a skilled attorney who has a wealth of experience in the law and criminal proceedings,” said Fallin. “Given her knowledge and experience, I know she will

Gov. Fallin Names Jordan Russell to Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission

09/15/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Jordan Russell to the Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Commission.

Russell, of Oklahoma City, will succeed Dr. LeRoy Young, whose resignation from the commission takes effect Oct. 3. Russell will serve the remainder of Young’s term, which expires in August 2019. He can begin serving immediately. His appointment still must be confirmed by the Senate when it convenes next session.

Russell, an attorney, is policy director and counsel to Oklahoma House Speaker Jeff Hickman. Before that, he worked as a practicing

ICYMI: Inhofe Praises Senate Passage of WRDA, Highlights Victories for Oklahoma

09/15/2016 03:30 PM CDT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, praised the Senate passage of the *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016*, which passed with a strong bipartisan vote of 95 to 3 and includes a number of provisions supporting Oklahoma’s priorities.

“With strong bipartisan support, the Republican-led Senate has once again moved an economy-boosting infrastructure bill with the passage of WRDA 2016,” Inhofe said. **"Many provisions in this year’s WRDA bill will benefit Oklahoma residents and job creators, and I am committed to seeing that these provisions and WRDA 2016 are signed into law before the end of this year. WRDA 2016 ensures that Corps projects in Oklahoma, including the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation**

Gov. Fallin Appoints Amy Ford to the Regional University System of Oklahoma

09/15/2016 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Amy Anne Ford, of Durant, to serve as a member of the board of regents for the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO).

She succeeds Terry Matlock, who resigned. Ford will serve the remainder of Matlock's term, which expires in June 2018. She can begin serving immediately. Her appointment still must be confirmed by the Senate when it convenes next session.

Ford, a business developer and consultant, previously served on the Oklahoma State Board of Education and the Oklahoma State Board of Career and Technology. She also served as chairman of the Oklahoma Standards Setting Steering Committee.

"Amy Ford has shown a keen interest in education in our state and has served our state well during her tenure on the state Board of Education," said Fallin. "She is an accomplished businesswoman who is aware of what students need to be successful during and

Star Pipe Products Announces Acquisition of Jensen International

09/15/2016 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - The state of Oklahoma and Star Pipe Products today announced that Star Pipe Products has acquired the assets of Jensen International, headquartered in Coffeyville, Kan., and its subsidiary, Jencast of South Coffeyville.

Jensen International is a diversified manufacturer providing casting, machining, metal fabrication, assembly and production of customized cast iron and ductile iron products.

The acquisition will allow Star Pipe to continue the operation of manufacturing domestically made cast iron and ductile iron products in South Coffeyville. The company intends to expand the existing facility in Oklahoma and install new and updated equipment.

"Today's announcement is great news for South Coffeyville and northeastern Oklahoma and represents the kind of high-quality, good-paying jobs we are working to bring to the state," said Governor Mary Fallin. "We appreciate Star Pipe Products' investment

Gov. Fallin Selects Judge Barbara Swinton to Fill Vacancy on Oklahoma Civil Appeals Court

09/14/2016 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Judge Barbara Swinton, of Oklahoma City, to fill the vacancy on the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals.

Swinton is replacing Judge Bill Hetherington, who retired Sept. 2 from District Four, Office One.

Since 2002, Swinton has served as district court judge for the 7th Judicial District. She served as a special judge in Oklahoma County for six years before she was elected to her current position.

Swinton has presided over more than 100 jury trials involving civil and criminal felony matters.

“The Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals plays an important role in ensuring our court system provides fair and just treatment for all,” Fallin said. “Judge Swinton is smart, even-tempered judge who both

Gov. Fallin Announces Oklahoma Veterans Pilot Program

09/13/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the official kickoff of the Oklahoma Veterans Pilot Program, a private/public initiative to develop a comprehensive healthcare access and delivery system for the state’s veterans.

The program will also design one statewide transitional system of care and then test that system in early 2017. The system will cover healthcare services in mental health, home health, nursing care, rehabilitative services, and coordinated access to physician services, laboratory services, pharmacy services and tele-health capability.

“We have assembled a bipartisan team of lawmakers, healthcare professionals, education professionals and business leaders,” said Fallin. “It is our hope this effort will produce a cost-effective model that can be emulated on a national basis.”

Gov. Fallin Statement on Anniversary of September 11

09/09/2016 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the 15th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

“Fifteen years after 9/11, the United States of America remains the world’s greatest beacon of liberty. On that day, the horrors of terrorism were brought to our doorstep and we were reminded our freedoms make us a target for the enemies of liberty.

“As we remember and pray for the victims of September 11 and their families, we should also take time to honor the heroic actions of countless Americans on that day. The heroes of United Flight 93 kept that plane from hitting its intended target. Thousands of firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency responders rushed to Ground Zero and other crash sites to save lives.

“Finally, let’s express our gratitude for the men and women of our armed services who risk their lives to protect the liberty of others, both here at home and

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency for Pawnee County after Earthquake

09/03/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has declared a state of emergency for Pawnee County due to a magnitude 5.6 earthquake that occurred Saturday morning near the city of Pawnee.

The earthquake was felt in multiple states and was the strongest the state has experienced since November 2011 when a magnitude 5.6 earthquake occurred in Lincoln County.

“I’m glad to hear no one was seriously hurt in today’s earthquake and damage appears to be limited. This emergency declaration will start the process to helping individuals, families and businesses impacted by the earthquakes and serves as a precursor to requesting any necessary assistance,” said Fallin.

“I appreciate the quick response by the Department of Emergency Management and Department of Transportation to assess damage of the affected area

Gov. Fallin Invites Oklahomans to Septemberfest at Governor's Mansion

09/02/2016 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen will host Septemberfest on Saturday, September 10, at the [Oklahoma History Center](#).

“Septemberfest is a beloved fall tradition for many Oklahoma families,” said Fallin. “The First Gentleman and I are proud the event has grown so much over the past 20 years that it is now hosted at the Oklahoma History Center, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, just north of the Governor’s Mansion.

“We’re thrilled Oklahomans have shown they love Septemberfest as much

Gov. Fallin Announces Initiative to Improve State's Criminal Justice System

08/31/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today launched a comprehensive review of Oklahoma’s criminal justice system aimed at developing data-driven reforms to better protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs.

Fallin charged the Oklahoma Justice Reform Task Force with submitting reform recommendations that can be considered during the 2017 legislative session.

“Criminal justice reform is a priority for my administration and I am confident that we can find ways to make our communities safer and cut the growing cost of our state’s corrections system,” said Fallin. “With the task force, we have the right people and the right process to generate reforms that will improve public safety by

keeping violent and career criminals behind bars and directing resources to programs that reduce rates of re-offending.”

The task force continues the work of the governor’s earlier criminal

Gov. Fallin Announces Jackson County Added to Disaster Declaration for June Flooding

08/31/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state of Oklahoma’s request for public assistance for **Jackson County** to help with expenses related to flooding and severe storms that began June 11.

The federal funds may be used to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with damages caused by the June storms.

Seven counties were previously approved for public assistance: **Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady, Stephens and Tillman.**

Preliminary assessments indicated the storm resulted in an estimated \$6.9 million in damages and response costs.

State of Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation Agree on Hunting, Fishing Compact

08/31/2016 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton have signed a hunting and fishing compact, which will allow the tribe to buy hunting and fishing licenses at a bulk rate.

The agreement grants the Choctaw Nation the ability to purchase at least 50,000 annual hunting and fishing licenses at \$2 apiece for its resident citizens. In addition, the Choctaw Nation will pay a lump sum of \$200,000 and an administrative cost payment of \$75,000 to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) each year that the three-year compact is in effect.

The

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Resignation of Health Care Authority CEO Nico Gomez

08/29/2016 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the resignation of Oklahoma Health Care Authority Chief Executive Officer Nico Gomez:

“Nico has been an inspirational leader who strived to make a positive difference for many of our most vulnerable Oklahomans by working to improve their health outcomes. Nico has been intent on developing Oklahoma-based solutions to expand and improve access to quality health care for low-income residents, children, the elderly and disabled. He has worked in public service for 20 years, and I wish him the best of luck as he ventures into the private sector.”

ICYMI: Tulsa World: Wayne Greene Commentary: Toll Road Plan Will Help Tulsa and Oklahoma Grow

08/26/2016 03:15 PM CDT

Posted: Friday, August 26, 2016

By WAYNE GREENE World Editorial Pages Editor

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority is considering a three-phase, \$900 million toll hike meant to finance new projects, including the critical link in Tulsa's outer loop, reconstruction of the first 20 miles of the Turner Turnpike and a rebuild of a dangerous portion of the Muskogee Turnpike.

To underwrite the authority's Driving Forward initiative, tolls would rise 12 percent in January, an additional 2.5 percent in January, 2018, and another 2.5 percent in July, 2019. The toll hikes would be timed to the planned sale of bonds to finance construction projects.

The latest version of the construction plan includes a 4.5 mile-extension of Tulsa's outer loop from Interstate 244's west Tulsa interchange with Interstate 44 to Edison Road near U.S. 412.

That would include a crucial bridge over the Arkansas

Gov. Fallin Announces Tillman County Added to Disaster Declaration for June Flooding

08/24/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state of Oklahoma's request for public assistance for **Tillman County** to help with expenses related to flooding and severe storms that began June 11.

The federal funds may be used to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with damages caused by the June storms.

Six counties were previously approved for public assistance: **Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady and Stephens.**

Preliminary assessments indicated the storm resulted in an estimated \$6.8 million in damages and response costs.

Gov. Fallin Statement on One-Year Anniversary of the Slaying of Mark Costello

08/23/2016 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the one-year anniversary of the killing of former Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Mark Costello:

“My thoughts and prayers go out today to the family and friends of Mark Costello, as well as employees of the Department of Labor. Mark passed away from us too early in life. Mark was a dedicated public servant and a devoted husband and father. Before he entered public service, he was an entrepreneur who guided several businesses to success.”

Gov. Fallin Signs Paperwork Placing Five Additional State Questions on November Ballot

08/22/2016 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed election proclamations that place five additional state questions on the November 8 general election ballot.

The paperwork signed by the governor placed these issues on the ballot:

- State Question (SQ) 779, which would increase the state sales tax by 1 percent to fund teacher pay raises and other education causes.
- SQ 780, which reclassify some criminal offenses, such as drug possession and property crimes, as misdemeanors instead of felonies.
- SQ 781, which would take money saved from implementing SQ 780 and allow counties to fund community rehabilitation programs.
- SQ 790, which would remove a section of the Oklahoma Constitution prohibiting use of state resources for religious purposes.
- SQ 792, which would allow wine and full-strength beer to be sold in grocery stores and convenience stores.

The deadline for the governor to sign election

Gov. Fallin, State Agencies Reveal New License Plate Design

08/22/2016 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today led an interagency coalition in unveiling the design for Oklahoma’s new state license plate, titled “Explore Oklahoma.” The new plate depicts Oklahoma’s state bird, a scissor-tailed flycatcher, soaring over lakes, mountains and mesas, highlighting Oklahoma’s diverse ecology and natural beauty.

The new plates will prominently display the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation’s website, TravelOK.com, and feature two distinct, more visible boxes for registration decals (displaying month and year separately). They will be printed on prismatic sheeting, enhancing their visibility at night.

Drivers will receive their new license plates beginning in January 2017.

“The new design will act as a travelling billboard for those looking to

Oklahoma City Listed Among Top Destination Cities for Millennials

08/19/2016 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today applauded Oklahoma City for being listed as a top place for millennials to live.

According to [data collected by realtor.com](#), Oklahoma City is the sixth-top destination for millennials.

“This is great news for our workforce,” said Fallin. “City

The Oklahoman: 'Freedom' Ranking Is Good News for Oklahoma

08/18/2016 03:15 PM CDT

.by [The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#) Published: August 18, 2016

OKLAHOMA typically lands at the lower end of 50-state rankings on a host of issues, so it's worth noting those occasions when the opposite occurs. The 2016 edition of the libertarian Cato Institute's “Freedom in the 50 States” report ranks

Oklahoma third-best for overall freedom.

The report ranks states “based on how their policies promote freedom in the fiscal, regulatory, and personal realms.” The authors' libertarian viewpoint leads them to emphasize some issues that one would expect (such as supporting lower levels of taxation and light regulation), but also more controversial policies (such as the institute's support for marijuana legalization and gambling).

Even so, there's much to like in the report.

For one thing, Oklahoma

Cooperation, Collaboration Produce Momentous Water Rights Agreement

08/18/2016 11:00 AM CDT

I'm proud to be part of the recently announced water rights settlement agreement among the state of Oklahoma, the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations and Oklahoma City. By choosing cooperation and collaboration over conflict and litigation, this historic agreement strengthens governmental relationships based on the common interests of the state and the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations.

Having a sufficient, reliable supply of water is essential for life, economic development, manufacturing, recreational activities, and important industry sectors like agriculture and energy.

The settlement, which will be presented to Congress for final approval, will resolve long-standing questions over water rights ownership and regulatory authority over the waters of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations' historic treaty territories, an area that spans approximately 22 counties in south-central and southeastern Oklahoma.

Under the agreement, the state will continue to

Water Rights Agreement Reached by the Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma and Oklahoma City

08/11/2016 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY/DURANT, Okla./ADA, Okla. – The Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations, the State of Oklahoma and the City of Oklahoma City announced today that they have reached a water rights settlement, which will be presented to Congress for final approval.

When finalized, the settlement will resolve long-standing questions over water rights ownership and regulatory authority over the waters of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations' historic treaty territories, an area that spans approximately 22 counties in south-central and southeastern Oklahoma. The agreement provides a framework that fosters intergovernmental collaboration on significant water resource concerns within the Settlement Area, while at the same time protecting existing water rights and affirming the State's role in water rights permitting and administration. Additionally, the agreement will implement a robust system of lake level release restrictions to allow Oklahoma City's measured use

Supreme Court Justice Steven Taylor to Retire

08/02/2016 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today received and accepted a [letter](#) from Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Steven Taylor stating his intention to retire at year's end.

"It has been my honor to serve this great state," Taylor wrote, "and my hope is that I leave a legacy of a firm dedication to the rule of law."

Taylor, who has served on the bench for nearly 33 years, said his retirement will take effect Dec. 31.

Taylor, of McAlester, said he wants to spend more time

Gov. Fallin statement on the passing of Maj. Gen. John Rossi

08/02/2016 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the passing of former Fort Sill commanding general Maj. Gen. John Rossi, who died Sunday:

"Maj. Gen. John Rossi was a dedicated public servant, as well as a strong and capable leader for Fort Sill during his time as commanding general. We worked together for many years while he was stationed in Oklahoma. Maj. Gen. Rossi's devotion to the men and women under his command was apparent to all who knew him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time."

Gov. Fallin Considers Special Session to Address Pay Raises for Public School Teachers

07/27/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the announcement that \$140.8 million initially cut from agency allocations midyear can now be allocated.

"I've begun discussions with legislative leaders to consider calling lawmakers to return in special session to address the issue of teacher pay raises. I continue to support a pay raise for teachers, having called on lawmakers at the beginning of this year's session to approve a teacher pay raise. Lawmakers considered it, but this was an extremely difficult budget year and a funding agreement couldn't be reached. With this available money, I am again asking lawmakers to act on this important issue of providing a raise for every teacher in this state."

The money is available because General Revenue Fund allocation reductions required by the FY 2016's midyear revenue failure were deeper than necessary. Without a special session, the \$140.8 million would

ICYMI: RNC 2016: Some Republicans Push Criminal-Justice Reform in Cleveland

In Case You Missed It

Toledo Blade: RNC 2016: Some Republicans push criminal-justice reform in Cleveland

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin speaks during the Republican National Convention in Cleveland Monday. ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

By Jim

Major Disaster Declaration Approved for June Storms

07/15/2016 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for six counties related to the flooding and severe storms that began June 11.

The approval means federal funding is available to assist municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the June storms.

Disaster assistance is approved for **Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady and Stephens** counties.

According to preliminary damage assessments, the storm resulted in an estimated \$6.7 million in damages and response costs in these counties alone.

The storm caused flash flooding that damaged nearly 300 homes and businesses, while washing out several bridges and rendering some roads impassable. Two deaths were attributed to the storms.

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Severe Storms

07/15/2016 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for 35 Oklahoma counties due to severe storms, straight-line winds, tornadoes and flooding that began July 13.

The counties included in the governor’s declaration are: **Adair, Beckham, Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Craig, Creek, Garfield, Grady, Grant, Haskell, Kay, Kingfisher, Latimer, LeFlore, Lincoln, Logan, Mayes, McCurtain, McIntosh, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Okmulgee, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner and Washington.**

Fallin’s

SBA Disaster Assistance Granted for Oklahoma Counties Impacted by June Storms

07/08/2016 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that seven Oklahoma counties may now receive disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a result of flooding and severe storms that began June 11.

The designation provides SBA low-interest disaster loans for homeowners and business owners in **Comanche County** to replace any property damaged by the storm that was not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. The loan program is also available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the storm.

Under SBA rules, the contiguous counties of **Caddo, Cotton, Grady, Kiowa, Stephens and Tillman** are also eligible for assistance.

Residents and business owners in those counties may apply for an SBA disaster loan online at

Gov. Fallin Orders Capitol Lights Be Turned Blue, Flags Flown at Half-Staff in Wake of Dallas Attack

07/08/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today ordered the lights on the state Capitol dome and at the gates of the Governor’s Mansion be turned to blue to honor police officers after five Dallas police officers were killed and seven others were wounded in a sniper attack Thursday night.

“This is a difficult time for our nation, with a number of officer-involved shootings drawing scrutiny around the country, but there is nothing to justify an attack on our police officers like the one we saw in Dallas,” said Fallin. “The men and women who put their lives on the line to protect our society every day deserve our respect and admiration. They are the ones we count on, day in and day out, to keep us safe from the people who would do us harm.

“My heart goes out to the officers who were killed or injured in the senseless shooting that disrupted a gathering of concerned citizens Thursday night in Dallas.”

The lights on the

Gov. Fallin Requests Major Disaster Declaration for 6 Oklahoma Counties

07/07/2016 07:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government as a result of flooding and severe storms last month.

Fallin requested public assistance to aid municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm in six southern Oklahoma counties.

The counties included in the state’s request for public assistance are: **Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady and Stephens.**

Severe weather that began June 11 caused flash flooding that drenched homes, businesses and vehicles, while washing out several bridges and rendering some roads impassable. Authorities performed more than 150 swift water rescues after the storms.

Preliminary damage assessments indicate the storms resulted in more than \$6.7 million in infrastructure damage and

Oklahoma Student Places Second in Western Governors Association Art Contest

07/07/2016 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today welcomed Kaitlyn Haught to the state Capitol to celebrate the artist’s success in the inaugural Western Governors Association (WGA) “Celebrate the West” regional art competition.

Haught, a recent Hooker High School graduate, earned second place in the contest with her colored pencil drawing “Cutting Horse.”

The drawing will displayed in the lobby of the governor’s office at the Capitol for the next 30 days.

“This is a truly beautiful picture, fully deserving of a place alongside the works of other great Oklahoma artists here at the Capitol,” said Fallin. “I’m looking forward to seeing more of Kaitlyn’s work as she continues to hone her artistic talents.”

Haught’s drawing was one of more than 200 entries in the WGA contest, which drew from 19 Western states.

WGA staff selected the winners from each state,

Gov. Fallin, DHS Announce Foster Care Recruitment Goal Reached

07/07/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced that her Oklahoma Fosters initiative with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS), private and faith-based partners has achieved its goal of recruiting more than 1,000 new foster families in Oklahoma.

DHS also reports that the number of children in state custody has dropped below 10,000 for the first time in three years.

This is the first time DHS has reached its foster care recruitment goal since the Pinnacle Plan was launched in 2012 to reform the state's foster care system.

“Oklahomans have again responded to a crucial need in our state,” said Fallin. “I’m pleased that so many Oklahomans came together to help us recruit foster and adoptive families so we can improve the lives of these children in state custody. I thank all of those Oklahomans who stepped up to make the commitment to be a foster or adoptive parent.”

While Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Statement on Independence Day

07/04/2016 07:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a happy Independence Day:

“At a time of uncertainty around the world, we are blessed to live in a country where freedom and liberty are still valued. Independence Day is a great time for all of us to reflect on what it means to be an American. I am wishing all Oklahomans a happy and safe Independence Day, while encouraging all of us to bear in mind the sacrifices made by those in the U.S. armed forces that have made this celebration possible.”

Commissioners of the Land Office Provides Record Annual Distribution to Public Schools

07/01/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - The Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) announced today it made a record distribution to Oklahoma’s public schools during the 2016 fiscal year, which ended June 30.

K-12 public schools received a total of \$102.2 million, which surpasses the 2015 fiscal year total by \$5 million. That set an all-time annual high for the CLO.

Higher education beneficiaries received \$700,000 more in the 2016 fiscal year than a year ago.

Total funds distributed to common and higher education by the CLO equaled \$134.4 million.

Harry Birdwell, secretary of the CLO, announced the news to commissioners earlier this week.

“Given all the negative factors in our state and national economies, these results are timely and encouraging,” Birdwell said. “With lower oil and gas prices, reduced interest in mineral leasing, lower agriculture commodity prices, low interest rates, and volatile stock prices, the

Gov. Fallin Announces Education Appointments

06/30/2016 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to education-related boards. Each appointment has been confirmed by the state Senate.

Board of Trustees for Langston University-Oklahoma City and Langston University-Tulsa

Stanley L. Evans, of Oklahoma City, was appointed to a seven-year term that ends in June 2023. He succeeds M.L. Jemison. Evans retired from the U.S. Army in 2000 after 32 years of service. He started law school at age 54 and went on to become associate dean for students at the University of Oklahoma College of Law. He retired in 2012, but remains involved at the college as a counselor, adviser and recruiter.

Board of Trustees for Oklahoma State University-Tulsa

John O’Connor, of Tulsa, was appointed to a seven-year term that ends in June 2022. He is succeeding Henry Primeaux. O’Connor, who earned his law degree from the University of Tulsa, is

Gov. Fallin Requests Major Disaster Declaration for June Flooding

06/29/2016 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma is requesting a major disaster declaration from the federal government related to the severe storms and flooding that began June 11.

Fallin requested individual assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners in three counties: **Caddo, Comanche and Garvin.**

Preliminary assessments indicate 290 homes and businesses were damaged, including 124 that sustained major damage or were destroyed.

The storm also resulted in numerous road closures and dangerous travel conditions in some areas, as well as more than 150 water rescues by Oklahoma Highway Patrol and local fire and police. Two deaths are attributed to the flooding.

If approved, additional counties may be added to the request at a later date should conditions warrant.

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointments

06/28/2016 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments, which have been confirmed by the Senate.

J.M. Davis Memorial Commission

Dr. Keith Ballard, the former superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools, was appointed to replace Donald Hill, who resigned. Ballard, of Claremore, will finish Hill's term that ends August 1, 2017. Ballard is a professor at the University of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission

Grant Humphreys, of Carlton Landing, is succeeding T.L. Walker to serve an unexpired term ending July 1, 2018. Humphreys, who earned a bachelor's degree in real estate from Baylor University, is the town founder of Oklahoma's newest municipality, Carlton Landing, a resort community on Lake Eufaula in eastern Oklahoma.

James W. Farris, of Oklahoma City, was appointed to a six-year term ending July 1, 2022. He is succeeding Gean Atkinson.

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Passing of Guymon Area Agriculture Producer Jim Draper

06/27/2016 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the passing of Jim Draper, a Guymon area agriculture producer who died Sunday:

"Jim Draper was a leader in agriculture and conservation in the Panhandle. He cared deeply about his state and enjoyed sharing his knowledge of agriculture with others. My prayers and deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends during this time of loss."

Gov. Fallin Directs Oklahoma Highway Patrol to Delay Use of Credit Card Reading Devices

06/17/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today directed her Cabinet secretary of safety and security to delay the use of devices that read the magnetic strips on credit, debit and gift cards as well as any other card that has financial information on them.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol has had the Electronic Recovery and Access to Data readers for about a month. The agency purchased 20 card readers, with 16 assigned to troopers. None of the devices have been used to help seize any funds.

The readers are intended to apprehend those involved in identity theft or other illegal activities involving monetary transactions. The readers allow troopers to read the back of the strip on a card or other item, such as a hotel room card, to see if it matches the information on the front.

Secretary of Safety and Security Michael Thompson, who also serves as commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, said that before troopers may use the readers, they must have

Gov. Fallin Does Not Approve of High Salary Offered to Agency Head

06/16/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust's (TSET) failure to file necessary hiring paperwork for a new, highly-paid chief executive position would violate the spirit of an [executive order](#) that she issued in February 2015.

The executive order prohibits new hires, employee raises or bonuses unless an exception is approved by the statewide elected official who directs and manages the agency or the appropriate Cabinet secretary. The agency so far has not submitted the paperwork for the new \$250,000

State of Emergency Declared for 9 Counties Due to Floods, Storms

06/14/2016 08:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb today declared a state of emergency for nine counties due to flooding, severe storms and straight-line winds that began Saturday. To read the executive order, [click here](#).

The counties covered in the declaration are: **Caddo, Carter, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady, McClain, Murray and Stephens.**

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

Since Saturday, these Oklahoma counties have experienced flooding, severe

Gov. Fallin Signs Budget Bill, Acts on Other Measures to Close out 2016 Legislative Session

06/10/2016 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed the 2017 fiscal year budget bill (Senate Bill 1616) into law. She also signed another bill and vetoed another, closing the book on the 2016 legislative session.

SB 1616, which outlines spending of state tax dollars for the fiscal year that begins July 1, maintains common education funding at current levels, averts closures of hospitals and nursing homes and closes \$969.3 million of the \$1.3 billion budget gap lawmakers faced this legislative session. The \$6.78 billion budget is \$360.7 million, or 5 percent, less than the 2016 fiscal year budget prior to the midyear revenue failure. It is \$67.8 million, or 1 percent, less than the 2016 fiscal year appropriations as adjusted by the midyear revenue failure.

The \$1.3 billion budget hole was the largest in state history.

“I am pleased that lawmakers were able to make targeted spending cuts and free up revenues through tax reform and

Gov. Fallin Appoints Dawson Engle to Pottawatomie County Associate District Judge Post

06/10/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Dawson Engle to serve as Pottawatomie County’s associate district judge. He will replace Associate District Judge John Gardner, who recently retired.

Engle, of Shawnee, has served as special judge for Pottawatomie and Lincoln counties since August 1, 2005.

“Judge Engle has proven he has the acumen and temperament necessary to be a successful judge,” said Fallin. “I’m certain he will continue to put his skills to good use in serving the people of Pottawatomie County.”

Engle graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1995 with a degree in business. He

Gov. Fallin Says Oklahoma Benefiting from "American Ninja Warrior" Filming at State Capitol

06/08/2016 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma is receiving a great deal of attention from news stories on last month’s filming of part of the "American Ninja Warrior" television show at the state Capitol. The episodes are scheduled to air June 20 and Aug. 1.

Since the show announced in February that Oklahoma City was chosen as a host city for the season finals, more than 260 media stories have been produced, reaching an audience of almost 200 million people and generating more than 1.2 billion page views. The total dollar value of the media attention is approximately \$4.5 million.

“The excitement regarding ‘American Ninja Warrior’ has brought attention to Oklahoma to many people across the state and across the country,” said Governor Mary Fallin. “The stories about the show and it being filmed in front of our state Capitol are bringing a great deal of positive press to our state that we otherwise wouldn’t have been

Index Ranks Oklahoma 5th for Economic Performance, 10th for Economic Outlook

06/07/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said Oklahoma’s improved rankings in an economic competitiveness index are proof that its business-friendly policies are working.

Oklahoma ranked as the 10th best overall state economic outlook (up from 16th in 2015) and 5th best state economic performance in Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index. The 9th edition of the report recently was released by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

“Since 2014, Oklahoma has significantly improved in these rankings, moving from No. 21 in economic outlook to No. 10,” said Fallin. “This progress shows

Challenging Legislative Session Had Its Bright Spots

06/07/2016 10:00 AM CDT

This legislative session certainly lived up to its billing as being challenging. Lawmakers faced a \$1.3 billion budget gap, the largest budget hole in state history.

I am pleased that lawmakers were able to make targeted spending cuts and free up revenues through tax reform and structural budget changes to close the gap. Those reforms included making some money in the Cash Flow Reserve Fund available for legislative appropriation, improving revenue stability of the General Revenue Fund by passing legislation creating the Revenue Stabilization Fund to deal with fluctuations in energy prices, and apportionment reform. We also ended the double deduction on income tax, capped a tax credit for at-risk wells and adjusted a coal credit.

We worked hard to protect key core services – common education, health and human services, corrections and the Oklahoma Health Care Authority – while keeping our eight-year transportation infrastructure plan intact.

Oklahoma City, Tulsa in Top Ten Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs

06/03/2016 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that two Oklahoma cities are among the 10 best in the nation for Hispanic entrepreneurs.

WalletHub recently released its 2016 Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs, ranking the 150 most populous cities in the U.S. based on business environment, access to resources and costs.

Tulsa ranked No. 9 and Oklahoma City ranked No. 10 for their Hispanic business-friendliness and Hispanic purchasing power.

“I am proud that

Oklahoma Communities Named to List of Best Cities to Start a Business

06/01/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said three Oklahoma cities have been named to a list of best places to start a business.

WalletHub recently released its 2016 Best Cities to Start a Business, ranking the 150 most populous cities in the U.S. based on business environment, access to resources and costs.

Oklahoma City ranked No. 3 overall (up 18 spots from 2015), just behind Sioux Falls, S.D. and Grand Rapids, Mich. It also ranked No. 7 in business environment.

Tulsa ranked No. 9 overall, including No. 4 in costs, and Enid ranked No. 11.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Oklahoma’s economy, creating a large portion of jobs in our state. We are happy to see these three cities being recognized for being great places for business start-ups,” said Fallin. “The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well across Oklahoma, and we will continue to support business-friendly policies that will help cultivate

Gov. Fallin Marks the End of the 2016 Legislative Session

05/27/2016 06:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The second session of the 55th Legislature concluded today. Governor Mary Fallin worked with lawmakers to deliver a fiscally responsible, balanced budget that maintains common education funding at current levels and prevents the closings of hospitals and nursing homes. Additionally, she worked with lawmakers to pass and sign into law key reforms in the areas of criminal justice government efficiency and health and human services.

“We worked hard to protect key core services – common education, health and human services, corrections and the Oklahoma Health Care Authority – while keeping our eight-year transportation infrastructure plan intact. My top priorities in

my second term are strengthening education and workforce, reducing the state's incarceration rates and improving its health outcomes.

Gov. Fallin Issues Memorial Day Holiday Statement

05/27/2016 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the Memorial Day holiday.

"I encourage all Oklahomans during this Memorial Day weekend to take time to remember and honor the sacrifices of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. Their service keeps our nation free and protects the freedoms we enjoy every day. Oklahomans have a deep and profound respect for the men and women of our military – and their families. We can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them.

"I'm wishing Oklahomans a safe and fun Memorial Day weekend. I know they will join me in keeping our former and current military personnel in their thoughts and prayers."

Rankings Put Oklahoma Among Best States for Property Tax Rates, State and Local Taxes

05/27/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma ranked No. 2 in property taxes and No. 10 in state and local taxes in recent rankings from CQ Press.

CQ Press' 2016 State Rankings book compares states across key measures in education, health, crime, transportation, taxes, government finance and more.

"When making business decisions, companies often look at rankings like these to determine options for relocation and expansion opportunities," said Governor Mary Fallin. "Understandably, tax rates play a critical role in these decisions.

2017 Fiscal Year Budget Agreement Reached

05/24/2016 02:00 PM CDT

FY 2017 budget agreement spreadsheet:

<https://www.ok.gov/OSF/documents/FY17GABillSummary.xlsx>

FY 2017 budget agreement summary:

Gov. Fallin Seeks SBA Disaster Assistance for Oklahoma Counties

05/23/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today asked for disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to benefit **Murray** and **Garvin**

counties, which were impacted by tornadoes, severe storms, flooding and straight-line winds that occurred May 9 -13.

The governor [in her letter](#) sought assistance for only Murray County, but if it is approved it would cover contiguous counties, including Garvin County, in accordance with SBA guidelines.

Damage assessments showed there were 79 homes and businesses affected by the storms in Murray County. Of those, 32 were destroyed or had major damage.

An additional 14 homes were affected in Garvin County. Two were destroyed or had major damage.

If approved, SBA low-interest disaster loans would be available for eligible

Gov. Mary Fallin Issues Executive Order Addressing Oklahoma's Feral Hog Problem

05/20/2016 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an executive order directing the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) to streamline the issuance of permits to exterminate feral hogs on private land.

She said her order will allow safe and responsible feral hog eradication in Oklahoma.

The governor also vetoed a measure that would have allowed the eradication of feral hogs on public land with spotlights at night without game warden notification or a hunting license, citing potential safety issues.

Fallin said Senate Bill 1142 contained several provisions -- such as eliminating the permitting requirement for those who want to exclusively shoot feral hogs, authorizing nighttime removal and allowing the use of certain technology to eradicate feral hogs -- that would endanger people on public hunting lands.

“We must be willing to employ every available method of elimination if we want to eradicate this

Gov. Fallin Vetoes Unconstitutional Anti-Abortion Bill

05/20/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, who has a long history of championing and signing pro-life and pro-family legislation, today vetoed a measure that would have banned abortion in the state because the bill was vague and would not withstand a criminal constitutional legal challenge.

Fallin is the most pro-life governor in the nation. She has signed 18 bills supporting pro-life values and protecting the health and lives of mothers and their unborn children.

Senate Bill 1552 would have made it a felony for physicians to perform abortions. It also contained a provision to revoke their medical licenses unless the abortion was necessary to save the life of the mother.

“The bill is so ambiguous and so vague that doctors cannot be certain what medical circumstances would be considered ‘necessary to preserve the life of the mother,’” Fallin said.

“The absence of any definition, analysis or medical

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Grand Jury Report on Oklahoma's Execution Protocol

05/19/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the report of the multicounty grand jury looking into the state of Oklahoma’s execution procedures:

“I want to thank Attorney General Scott Pruitt, his staff and the grand jurors for their time and effort on this important matter. At my direction, my office cooperated with the grand jury’s investigation in all respects. Because I just received the report, I will need time to analyze it.

“When the state of Oklahoma carries out the death penalty, we must ensure that the process is appropriate and in full compliance with the law. It is imperative that Oklahoma be able to manage the execution process properly. With new management at the Department of Corrections, led by Interim Director Joe Allbaugh, I am confident we can move forward with a process that complies with the applicable policies, protocols and legal requirements.”

Settlement Creates Opportunity to Sell Land at Lake Texoma for Hotel Development

05/19/2016 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin said today the settlement negotiated by Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) with Pointe Vista Development LLC clears the way to sell 50 premier acres overlooking the historic Roosevelt Bridge spanning Lake Texoma for development of a hotel.

Some land held by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism that was under contract to would-be developer Pointe Vista Development, of Oklahoma City, will remain in the hands of the state to be redeveloped as a state park.

“The settlement negotiated by the Commissioners of the Land

Gov. Fallin Welcomes Decision by Chairman of the Oklahoma Tax Commission to Remain on Panel

05/18/2016 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said she is pleased that Steve Burrage, chairman of the Oklahoma Tax Commission, is withdrawing his letter of resignation and will continue to head the three-member panel.

Burrage sent the governor a letter last month stating his intention to resign from the Tax Commission because of unforeseen personal reasons. He sent a note asking to withdraw that letter.

“There is much left to be accomplished,” Burrage wrote. “I would be honored to remain a part of your administration, as you seek solutions to the difficult problems that lie ahead for our state.”

Fallin appointed Burrage to the Tax Commission on Feb. 1, 2015. In 2012, she appointed him to the Oklahoma Board of Corrections. From 2008-10, he served as state auditor and inspector.

Burrage previously served as president, chief executive officer and chairman of The First Bank of Antlers for more than 30 years.

Gov. Fallin Signs Compact with Osage Nation to Help Protect Vulnerable Adults

05/17/2016 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed the first compact between the state and a tribal nation to help protect vulnerable adults.

The compact signed by Fallin and Osage Nation Assistant Principal Chief Raymond Red Corn is intended to improve cooperation and achieve coordinated services between the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) and the tribe’s social services department. The compact is for five years.

“The state of Oklahoma and the Osage Nation already are important partners and have compacts dealing with tobacco, cross-deputization, transportation infrastructure, gaming and motor fuel,” said Fallin. “This is just another example of an opportunity for state leaders and tribal leaders to get together to strengthen our partnerships.”

“Both the Osage constitution and Osage culture require us to protect our Osage elders and vulnerable adults,” said Red Corn. “This

Gov. Fallin Applauds House Committee for Passing Cigarette Tax Measure

05/16/2016 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today congratulated members of the House of Representatives Joint Committee on Appropriations and Budget for passing

House Bill 3210, which would increase the cigarette excise tax by \$1.50 per pack. It passed, 16-11.

“This is a crucial step in reducing Oklahoma’s leading cause of preventable death – smoking,” said Fallin. “It is the single most effective way to reduce smoking and improve Oklahoma’s health.”

The governor applauded lawmakers for taking steps to approve the cigarette tax, which requires a three-fourths majority in both the House and Senate, instead of approving a measure sending the question to a vote of the people in November.

“Legislative approval means revenue from the tax can be coming into state coffers sooner, which would help offset some of the \$1.3 billion deficit facing our state in the upcoming fiscal year, which starts July

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency for 15 Counties

05/10/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for 15 counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding since Sunday. To read the executive order, [click here](#).

The counties included in the governor’s declaration are: **Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Cleveland, Coal, Comanche, Garvin, Johnson, Kay, McCurtain, Murray, Noble, Payne, Stephens and Tillman.**

“I appreciate the ongoing work of our first responders who have been working diligently to assist those in need,” said Fallin. “I also offer my continued thoughts and prayers to all those affected by the storms.”

The storms resulted in at least two deaths, one in Garvin County and one in Johnston County, and multiple injuries.

Under the executive order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions

Gov. Fallin Statement on Oklahoma Tornadoes

05/10/2016 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement today regarding Monday’s tornadoes and storms in Oklahoma:

“My thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who were killed or hurt as a result of these storms. I am in constant contact with our State Emergency Operations Center and I know local authorities are doing everything they can to respond to those affected by the storms.

“With the threat of severe weather returning to our state Wednesday, I am asking all

Oklahomans to stay aware of the weather and to take proper precautions to keep themselves out of harm's way.

"I want to thank groups like the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma for feeding first responders, providing bulk distribution of cleanup supplies and assisting families whose homes were damaged or destroyed. The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Passing of Former Oklahoma Governor David Hall

05/06/2016 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the death of David Hall, who served as Oklahoma's governor from 1971 until 1975. He was 85.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the family of former Governor David Hall. During his tenure as governor, he focused on the state's education system and was committed to expanding Oklahoma's roads. He called education the 'golden problem solver of the 20th century,' and introduced what was then the largest-road-building program in Oklahoma history.

"I served as a page at the Capitol my sophomore year at Tecumseh High School, and still have the picture Governor Hall took with me."

Commercial Metals Company Celebrates the Groundbreaking of New Micro Mill in Durant

04/29/2016 12:30 PM CDT

Gov. Fallin Signs Four Criminal Justice Reform Bills

04/27/2016 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today signed four criminal justice reform bills related to proposals she outlined in her State of the State address at the start of this year's legislative session.

"These measures will preserve public safety while helping control prison costs and reduce incarceration rates," said Fallin. "According to all measures, Oklahoma has some of the highest incarceration rates in the country.

"Many of our inmates are non-violent offenders with drug abuse and alcohol problems who need treatment. This will pave the way for a wider use of drug courts

and community sentencing as well as give judges and district attorneys more discretion in sentencing.”

The governor signed:

- **House Bill (HB) 2472**, which gives prosecutors discretion to file charges for non-85 percent crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies.
- **HB 2479**,

Gov. Fallin Presents 36 Schools with Spotlight on Academic Achievement Awards

04/21/2016 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today recognized the teachers, staff, students and parents of 36 schools for their efforts to improve their school grades in Oklahoma’s A-F School Report Card.

The schools were presented with the Governor’s Spotlight on Academic Achievement Award. Recognized schools included elementary, middle, junior and high schools.

“This award speaks to the most important value of our state – hard work,” said Fallin. “It is not easy to see the significant academic gains that you all have shown, so I think it is very important to recognize your efforts.

“Every child in Oklahoma deserves to have a high quality education. The students, teachers, administrators and parents at these schools serve as an example how to improve academic performance in schools.”

The Oklahoma Legislature adopted the A-F School Grading System to provide incentives to schools

Gov. Fallin Applauds Oklahoma Senate for Passing Criminal Justice Bills

04/20/2016 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the Oklahoma Senate for its bipartisan and overwhelming approval of four criminal justice bills related to reforms spotlighted in her State of the State address at the start of this year’s legislative session.

“Oklahoma’s drug possession sentences have filled our prisons to over capacity,” said Fallin. “These sentences, while well intentioned, tend to send some nonviolent offenders into prison for years and years, where they live alongside violent offenders whose bad influences can make nonviolent offenders worse.

“Keeping our public safe from dangerous people will always be a priority, however with our state prisons filled to well over capacity, it is vital that we make some changes to our criminal justice system. These measures will address Oklahoma’s

prison population, which is among the highest in the nation, without jeopardizing public safety.”

Gov. Fallin Leads Oklahoma Delegation to New York to Meet with Williams Chairman

04/15/2016 07:00 PM CDT

TULSA — Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin; Tulsa Mayor Dewey F. Bartlett, Jr.; Jeff Dunn, chair of the Tulsa Regional Chamber and president and CEO of Mill Creek Lumber and Supply Company; Stuart Solomon, immediate past chair of the Tulsa’s Future program and president and CEO of Public Service Company of Oklahoma; and Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber, traveled to New York City earlier today to meet with Frank MacInnis, chairman of the Williams Cos. board of directors. The trip was made in an effort to make the plea for Williams to reconsider the sale of Williams Companies to Dallas-based Energy Transfer Equity (ETE).

“We wanted to let Williams Cos. Board Chairman Frank MacInnis know that the state of Oklahoma is willing to help fight to keep the company’s jobs in the great city of Tulsa,” said Governor Fallin.

“Oklahoma certainly supports and appreciates the energy sector and

Gov. Fallin Statement on Passing of Jon Hansen

04/15/2016 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the passing of Jon Hansen, a former assistant chief for the Oklahoma City Fire Department who served as the department’s spokesman in the aftermath of the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building:

“My thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Jon Hansen. Jon was an instrumental figure in Oklahoma City’s recovery from the horrible aftermath of the Murrah building bombing almost 21 years ago. His calm voice reassured everyone who was watching that process with an implied promise that we could overcome the terror of that tragic morning. He personified the Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Announces Disaster Assistance Available for Counties Impacted by March Storms

04/14/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that eight Oklahoma counties may now receive disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business

Administration (SBA) to aid in recovery efforts from tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds that began on March 30.

The SBA granted the state's request for low-interest disaster loans for homeowners and business owners in **Tulsa County** to repair or replace storm-damaged property that was not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. The loan program also is available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the storm.

Under SBA rules, the contiguous counties of **Creek, Okmulgee, Osage, Pawnee, Rogers, Wagoner** and **Washington** counties are also eligible for assistance.

A Disaster Loan Outreach Center opens Monday at the Antioch Baptist Church at 110 W. 59th Street N. in Tulsa. SBA

Gov. Fallin Statement on Signing House Bill 2720

04/11/2016 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on signing House Bill 2720, which amends the Oklahoma Charter School Act to clarify how public school districts may convert an existing public school to a “conversion school:” (A conversion school has the flexibility of a charter school.)

“House Bill 2720 empowers local school boards to create conversion schools allowing for additional flexibilities similar to charter schools. I hope schools will use this opportunity to maximize resources to increase educational outcomes. I appreciate the bi-partisan effort from Representative Emily Virgin, Speaker Pro Tem Lee Denney and Senator Clark Jolley to ensure the success of this bill, as well as the input from the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. This is a positive step forward to improve the quality of education in our state.”

HB 2720 also amends the Charter School Act to clarify the

ICYMI: WalletHub Study: Oklahoma Is the State with the 6th-Lowest Tax Burden

04/11/2016 12:45 PM CDT

Only a week remains before Uncle Sam takes his cut from everyone’s earnings this past year. And many taxpayers are already wondering what that haircut on their finances will look like. However, with such a complex and convoluted tax code that’s further complicated by how taxes are imposed on Americans based on their individual household characteristics, it’s hard to tell.

But one simple ratio, “tax burden,” cuts through the confusion and gives a straightforward answer. Not to be confused with tax rates, which fluctuate widely based on an individual’s particular circumstances, tax burden measures the exact portion of the total personal income of residents in a state that are paid toward state and local taxes.

To determine which states are most aggressive at taking their residents' income, WalletHub's analysts compared the 50 states across the three tax types that comprise state tax burden — property

Gov. Fallin Seeks SBA Disaster Assistance for Tulsa and Rogers Counties

04/08/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today asked for disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for **Tulsa** and **Rogers** counties and other counties impacted by tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds that began March 30.

The governor [in her letter](#) sought assistance for only Tulsa County, but if it is approved it would cover contiguous counties, including Rogers County, in accordance with SBA guidelines.

Damage assessments showed there were 287 homes and businesses affected by the storms in Tulsa County. Of those, 34 were destroyed or had major damage.

An additional 200 homes were affected in Rogers County. Two were destroyed or had major damage.

If approved, SBA low-interest disaster loans would be available for eligible homeowners and business owners to replace any

Gov. Fallin Applauds Senate Committee for Passing Criminal Justice Bills

04/06/2016 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today commended the Senate Appropriations Committee for its bipartisan support of four bills related to reforms she highlighted in her State of the State address at the start of this year's legislative session.

“Our state prisons are filled to well over capacity so it is crucial that we make some changes to our criminal justice system,” said Fallin. “These measures do not jeopardize public safety while addressing Oklahoma’s prison population, which is among the highest in the nation. I appreciate the support of the Senate Appropriations Committee in approving these vital measures.”

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed:

- **House Bill (HB) 2472** would give prosecutors discretion to file charges for non-85 percent crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies.
- **HB 2479** would reduce the mandatory punishment for

Gov. Fallin Expands State of Emergency to 10 Additional Counties Due to Wildfires

04/06/2016 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today amended [an executive order](#) to declare a state of emergency for 10 additional counties due to ongoing wildfires and critical fire weather conditions.

The executive order was amended to include the following counties: **Alfalfa, Blaine, Creek, Dewey, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Logan, Major** and **Woodward**. The governor last week issued an executive order that covered **Woods** County.

What began as four separate fires merged Wednesday into one large wildfire in Woodward County. Firefighting task forces, heavy equipment and large air tankers are being used to suppress the fire, which with the aid of high winds has burned more than 55,000 acres.

Under the executive order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions.

Highlighting the Value of STEM Education and the Growth of STEM-related Jobs

04/06/2016 01:45 PM CDT

In the moments before several hundred middle and high school students tackled challenging projects at this year's Oklahoma Engineering Fair in February, they gathered for an opening ceremony.

Speakers welcomed the students to the Science Museum of Oklahoma and told them that GE Corporation was one of the sponsors of the event. Then they were given an impromptu quiz.

"How many of you know what GE is?" the students were asked. A few dozen hands went up.

For the next 30 seconds or so the students learned that GE is one of the nation's largest employers of engineers and that it is building a \$110 million, 125,000-square-foot global research center for oil and natural gas technology in the heart of Oklahoma City.

Anyone who has driven on the Centennial Expressway near downtown Oklahoma City in the past few months has seen the magnificent structure rising from the ground. It will stand as a gleaming example of the

Gov. Fallin Announces Education Appointments

04/04/2016 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to education-related boards. Each appointment must be confirmed by the Senate.

Board of Regents of Eastern Oklahoma State College

Teresa K. Jackson, of Hartshorne, is being reappointed for a new seven-year term that will expire in 2023. Jackson, a graduate of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, is senior executive officer of health for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Board of Regents of Murray State College

Dr. Scott Wood, of Tishomingo, is replacing Ronald Austin, who resigned. Wood, who will serve the remainder of Austin's term that expires in 2020, operates Wood Chiropractic Clinic and Texoma Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Clinic LLC. He also is a tribal legislator for the Chickasaw Nation.

Board of Regents of Tulsa Community College

Samuel Combs III, of Bixby,

[Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency for Seven Oklahoma Counties Impacted by Tornadoes, Storms](#)

04/01/2016 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an [executive order](#) declaring a state of emergency for seven northeastern Oklahoma counties impacted by tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds that occurred earlier this week.

The declaration is for **Craig, Mayes, Nowata, Osage, Rogers, Tulsa** and **Washington** counties.

The storms caused damage to homes and businesses Wednesday evening and injured seven people. Damage assessments are ongoing in the hardest-hit areas.

Under the executive order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions.

Executive Order 2016-09 is in effect for 30 days, and could be amended to include additional counties if needed.

[SBA Disaster Assistance Granted for Oklahoma Counties Impacted by December Storms](#)

03/30/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that 10 Oklahoma counties may now receive disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business

Administration (SBA) as a result of the winter storm and flooding that began December 26.

The designation provides SBA low-interest disaster loans for homeowners and business owners in **Cherokee, Mayes and Ottawa** counties to replace any property damaged by the storm that was not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. The loan program is also available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the storm.

Under SBA rules, the contiguous counties of **Adair, Craig, Delaware, Muskogee, Rogers, Sequoyah and Wagoner** are also eligible for assistance.

The state requested the SBA declaration on March 23 after the Federal Emergency Management Agency denied the governor's appeal for

Gov. Fallin Statement on Passing of Phil Tomlinson

03/30/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the passing of Phil Tomlinson, who served as Oklahoma secretary of transportation from 2003 until 2009:

"My thoughts and prayers are with the family of Phil Tomlinson, who served the state of Oklahoma with great distinction. He served six years as secretary of transportation under former Governor Brad Henry, and also served as director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, where he was instrumental in modernizing agency contracts for real estate and travel stops. In addition, he served as a coordinator of rural economic development programs for former Governors Dewey Bartlett and David Hall. He also will be remembered for his work in commercial real estate projects."

Four Oklahoma Communities Named to List of Nation's Top Micropolitans

03/30/2016 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Site Selection magazine recently ranked Durant as No. 13 in its listing of the Top 100 Micropolitans. Three other Oklahoma cities – Enid, Bartlesville and Miami – also made the list.

According to the article, a micropolitan is defined by the Office of Management and Budget in the White House as one or more adjacent counties that have at least one urban core area of at least 10,000 population but less than 50,000. It also must have an adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.

In addition to ranking Durant at No. 13, the magazine listed Enid at No. 39; Bartlesville at No. 73 (tie); and Miami also at No. 73 (tie). Those communities had 13 successful economic development projects in 2015.

“Oklahoma continues to attract economic development projects in both urban and rural areas,” said Governor Mary Fallin. “The addition

Gov. Fallin Tours Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity Inmate Program

03/29/2016 03:45 PM CDT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 2016

Governor Mary Fallin Tours Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity Inmate Program

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin toured Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity’s (COHFH) inmate program contracted through the Department of Human Services today at the Central Oklahoma Habitat headquarters located at 5005 S I-35 Service Rd. in Oklahoma City.

“Programs like this must be part of our approach to criminal justice. We must show offenders that there are other choices than returning to crime once they are released from prison,” said Fallin. “This Habitat for Humanity program teaches inmates important skills, while benefitting an organization that works to provide much-needed homes for low-income residents.”

The COHFH Inmate Program is a Department of Corrections (DOC) Prisoners Public Work Program (PPWP), which allows inmates

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency for Woods County Due to Wildfires, Drought Conditions

03/28/2016 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued [an executive order](#) declaring a state of emergency for Woods County, where a wildfire has burned almost 400,000 acres of prairie and ranch land in it and two adjoining counties in Kansas.

The fire began last week in Oklahoma and spread north to Kansas, where it has been described as the largest in its state history. The fire at one time covered about 140,000 acres in Oklahoma

The governor said moderate drought conditions that exist in northwest Oklahoma and the Panhandle are contributing to the threat to Woods County residents and their property.

Under the executive order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions.

The executive order is in effect for 30 days, and could be amended to include additional counties if needed.

Gov. Fallin Says USGS Earthquake Hazard Map Shows State Regulators Are Taking Correct Action

03/28/2016 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today said the first-ever map developed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) showing potential ground-shaking hazards from both human-induced and natural earthquakes illustrates why action taken earlier this year by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) was necessary.

Researchers say the state's rise in earthquakes is caused by the disposal of produced saltwater deep into the Arbuckle formation. The OCC, which has constitutional authority over oil and natural gas activity in the state, is following the recommendation of researchers and is continuing to work with operators to significantly reduce the overall disposal of produced water into the area of seismic interest within the Arbuckle formation area to 40 percent below the 2014 total.

The OCC last month issued a wide-ranging directive to saltwater disposal well operators in areas experiencing earthquakes. In the past year, regulators have

FEMA Reaffirms Denial of Aid for Storm Victims in Nine Oklahoma Counties

03/23/2016 06:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today expressed disappointment that the federal government has denied the state's appeal for individual assistance for residents and business owners in nine eastern Oklahoma counties affected by a winter storm and flooding that struck after Christmas.

In a March 11 letter, the governor had asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reverse its recent decision denying individual assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners affected by winter storm, ice, sleet and flooding that began Dec. 26. The assistance was sought for **Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, McCurtain, Muskogee, Ottawa, Pushmataha and Sequoyah** counties.

FEMA approved public assistance for 42 Oklahoma counties that were affected by the same storm and individual assistance for 33 Missouri counties and 11 Arkansas counties.

Click

Gov. Fallin Signs Supplemental Funding Bills for Public Schools, Prisons

03/23/2016 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed two measures that will tap nearly \$80 million from the state’s Rainy Day Fund.

Senate Bill (SB) 1572 appropriates \$51 million to the State Department of Education to provide money for public schools and to pay the full cost of health insurance for teachers, administrators and support personnel. SB 1571 sends \$27.5 million to the Department of Corrections (DOC) for payroll and essential services for inmate population increases.

“I appreciate members of the House of Representatives and the Senate for their quick approval of these two bills, and for the cooperation of their leaders in agreeing that this is the most responsible option,” said Fallin. “The appropriation of these supplemental funds will pay for vital state services for education and corrections between now and when this fiscal year ends on June 30.

“Now, legislators need to focus on the 2017

Gov. Fallin Statement on Passing of Enid Oilman Lew Ward

03/21/2016 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued a statement on the death of Enid oilman Lew Ward, who died Sunday:

“My prayers are with the family of oilman Lew Ward. Lew was one of the oilfield pioneers who made Oklahoma such a leader in that industry. As founder of Enid-based Ward Petroleum Corp., he devoted his career to developing oil and gas resources that continue to fuel our nation. He was a former president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America and served as a national Republican committeeman from Oklahoma. All the while, he selflessly supported a variety of community causes. He will be missed.”

Disaster Aid Approved for Ottawa County

03/18/2016 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the federal government has approved public assistance for **Ottawa County** to help with storm and flooding recovery expenses related to the winter storm and flooding that began Dec. 26.

The federal funds may be used to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with damages caused by the December storms and flooding.

Forty-one counties were previously approved for public assistance: **Adair, Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo,**

Gov. Fallin Appoints Michele McElwee to Oklahoma County District Judge Position

03/15/2016 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Michele McElwee to a district judge post in Oklahoma County. She will replace District Judge Bernard Jones, who resigned in July to become a federal magistrate in Oklahoma City.

McElwee, of Edmond, currently works as a prosecutor in Oklahoma County.

“Michele McElwee is a dedicated public servant, who will make a fine addition to the Oklahoma County judiciary,” said Fallin.

Gov. Fallin Appeals FEMA Denial, Seeks Aid for Winter Storm, Flooding Victims

03/11/2016 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today filed a formal appeal on behalf of residents and business owners in nine eastern Oklahoma counties affected by a winter storm and flooding that struck after Christmas.

The governor asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reverse its recent decision denying individual assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners affected by winter storm, ice, sleet and flooding that began Dec. 26. The assistance was sought for **Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, McCurtain, Muskogee, Ottawa, Pushmataha and Sequoyah** counties. Read the letter [here](#).

FEMA approved public assistance for 41 Oklahoma counties that were affected by the same storm and individual assistance for 33 Missouri counties and 11 Arkansas counties.

“I am at a loss to explain how these

Seeking Foster Families to Take Care of Our Children

03/11/2016 10:30 AM CST

I can still remember the late-night telephone calls. My mom worked for the Department of Human Services and was needed to deal with an emergency placement of a child. As my mom prepared to leave, I would hope there would be a safe home to take care of those children.

I still have that wish today. A new initiative that DHS and I recently launched is helping make my wish a reality.

Oklahoma Fosters is a combined, coordinated campaign to renew our efforts to find foster families for the hundreds of children in state custody and coming into state custody.

Our goal, simply put, is to recruit more foster families.

These children are in state custody through no fault of their own. These children need foster families to love and support them during their time of need.

There are nearly 10,500 children in the foster care system, and we desperately need the help of all Oklahomans.

Oklahoma Fosters is a statewide campaign

Conversation about Providing Children with Needed Educational Options to Continue

03/10/2016 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – House Speaker Jeff Hickman and Senate President Pro-Tempore Brian Bingman announced neither the House nor Senate will be voting on separate measures today that would create Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). The leaders resolved to continue working on the critical issue of providing Oklahoma children with needed educational opportunities until a resolution can be agreed upon by legislators of both chambers.

“The focus of this effort has been, first and foremost, to find solutions for the children who desperately need better opportunities and to know someone cares,” said Hickman, R-Fairview. “The desire to improve student outcomes and empower parents without harming our public schools will be the goal we continue to work toward in the future.”

The bills that had passed legislative committees were House Bill 2949 and Senate Bill 609.

“I appreciate Senator Jolley’s efforts on SB 609,”

Governor Mary Fallin Reappoints Charles R. Ford to the Board of Trustees for Oklahoma State University

03/10/2016 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY –Governor Mary Fallin announced today that she is reappointing Charles R. Ford to the board of trustees for Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

Ford, of Tulsa, will serve another seven-year term as trustee after confirmation by the Oklahoma Senate.

Ford served as minority floor leader in the state Senate from 1991 to 1992. He was the principal author of legislation creating OSU-Tulsa. He and his wife, Patricia, endowed a scholarship at the university.

“Charles is a passionate, long-time supporter of OSU-Tulsa,” said Fallin. “His devotion to public service and his business experience will continue to benefit the university.”

Ford serves on numerous boards and commissions. He is the owner and president of Charles R. Ford Co., a real estate investment firm in Tulsa. He also began a non-profit foundation which has provided more than 170 pieces of fine art at no charge to the state Capitol.

Governor, legislative leaders announce agreement to tap Rainy Day Fund for public schools, prisons

03/09/2016 05:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman and House Speaker Jeff Hickman today announced an agreement to use about \$78.5 million from the state’s Rainy Day Fund to partially offset budget cuts to common education and corrections for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Under the agreement, the Department of Education is to receive \$51 million and the Department of Corrections (DOC) is to receive \$27.5 million.

"All of us can agree that four-day school weeks and draconian cuts to corrections are not acceptable and are not going to happen," said Fallin. "This is the most responsible option available to keep vital state services for education and corrections going between now and the end of June when this fiscal year ends."

Bingman said: "The Rainy Day Fund is there for emergencies and right now it's pouring in Oklahoma. Tapping the Rainy Day Fund is the right way to

Gov. Fallin Proposes Rainy Day Fund Withdrawal for Schools and Prisons

03/07/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today proposed using the state’s savings account, the Rainy Day Fund, to partially offset last week’s deepened budget cuts to common education and prisons.

The governor suggested using \$51 million for public schools and \$21 million for the Department of Corrections. The Rainy Day Fund contains \$385 million, of which \$144.4 million is available to address the 2016 fiscal year revenue failure.

"Four-day school weeks and draconian cuts at prisons are not acceptable and are not going to happen. The deepened revenue failure cuts have changed the budget situation in a way that requires immediate action, so I support accessing the Rainy Day Fund for common education and prisons," said Fallin. "This is the most

responsible option available today to keep vital state services at acceptable levels until the Legislature and I reach agreement on the recurring revenues necessary to fund these

Gov. Fallin Signs First Bill of 2016 Legislative Session

03/07/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today signed the first bill of the 2016 legislative session, a measure that moves the Will Rogers Memorial Commission under the control of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Senate Bill (SB) 1570 goes into effect immediately since it was passed with an emergency clause.

“This is the kind of state consolidation and efficiencies that make sense as Oklahoma struggles to cope with falling revenues,” said Fallin. “Moves like this are important as we work to

Gov. Fallin Appoints Ken Darby as District Attorney for Five Southwest Oklahoma Counties

03/07/2016 04:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Ken Darby as district attorney for five southwest Oklahoma counties. He will replace John Wampler, who is retiring effective April 1.

Darby, of Duke, will take over as chief prosecutor for Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa and Tillman counties for the remainder of Wampler’s term, which expires in 2019.

“Ken Darby is the ideal choice to serve District 3,” said Fallin. “He has dedicated his career to serving the people

Gov. Fallin Applauds House of Representatives for Passing Criminal Justice Bills

03/07/2016 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today commended the Oklahoma House of Representatives for its bipartisan approval of four bills related to reforms spotlighted in her State of the State address last month.

“These measures address Oklahoma’s prison population, which is among the highest in the nation, without jeopardizing public safety,” said Fallin. “With our state prisons filled to well over capacity, it is vital that we make some changes to our criminal justice system.”

The House passed:

- **House Bill 2472** would give prosecutors discretion to file charges for non-85 percent crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies.
- **House Bill 2479** would reduce the mandatory punishment for subsequent drug offenses.
- **House Bill 2751** would raise the threshold for property crimes to be charged as a felony to

Gov. Fallin Thanks House of Representatives for Passing Revenue Measure

03/07/2016 12:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the Oklahoma House of Representatives for passing a bill that would free up about \$125 million annually for the General Revenue Fund, the state’s main spending account.

House Bill (HB) 3058 would automatically reconcile some agency revolving funds, which usually contain a total of about \$1.5 billion. The House voted 56-28 to pass HB 3058. It now goes to the Senate.

“The transfer of monies from these accounts is often mischaracterized as one-time revenue, despite the fact the majority of these accounts replenish yearly,” said Fallin. “These funds are there every year. They are not one-time funds.”

The measure, by Rep. Tom Newell, was one of several ideas the governor proposed in her State of the State address last month to capture more than \$900 million in recurring revenues for appropriations to help fund core services. The state is facing a \$1.3 billion

Groups, Leaders Endorse Gov. Fallin's Criminal Justice Reform Package

03/04/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin’s criminal justice reform package was endorsed today by policy groups, business leaders and chambers of commerce from the state’s two largest cities.

“These policies are evidence based and driven by consensus among Oklahoma’s experts. The broad range of support further illustrates that these measures are the best options for criminal justice reform in Oklahoma and we urge their quick passage in the legislature,” they wrote in a letter that will be distributed to lawmakers.

Four bills proposed by the governor’s Oklahoma Justice Reform Committee are scheduled to be heard early next week by the state House of Representatives.

The letter supporting the bills was signed by:

- Oklahoma Policy Institute

- Greater Oklahoma City Chamber,
- Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Oklahoma District Attorneys Association

The Oklahoman Editorial: Repealing Tax Credits Won't Solve Oklahoma Budget Shortfall

03/04/2016 12:45 PM CST

By The Oklahoman Editorial Board Published: March 4, 2016

GIVEN Oklahoma's \$1.3 billion shortfall, many expected state lawmakers to consider some tax or fee increases this year, along with spending cuts, to fill the budget hole. And members of the Oklahoma Senate, in particular, have advanced numerous bills to repeal or place moratoriums on current tax breaks.

The problem is that the Senate has advanced numerous tax increases of various stripes while doing little to address this year's budget challenges. This is occurring because the impact of many tax changes would not be felt until the 2018 budget year, as opposed to the 2017 state budget lawmakers are drafting this session.

That policy formula would give Oklahomans the worst of both worlds: massive spending cuts in 2017 followed by large tax increases in 2018. So why raise taxes to

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Death of Aubrey McClendon

03/02/2016 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the death of Aubrey McClendon:

“My thoughts and prayers are with Aubrey McClendon’s family, friends and colleagues during this very difficult time. Aubrey will be remembered for his innovations in the oil and natural gas industry, his civic generosity and being a driving force to help grow economic opportunities for Oklahoma. He was a visionary who raised the profile of Oklahoma City.” – Governor Mary Fallin

Gov. Fallin Applauds House Committee for Passing Criminal Justice Reform Bills

02/24/2016 06:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commended the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee for approving four bills related to reforms spotlighted in her State of the State address earlier this month.

“Keeping our public safe from dangerous people will always be a priority, however with our state prisons filled to well over capacity, it is vital that we make some changes to our criminal justice system,” said Fallin. “The measures I have proposed

will address Oklahoma's prison population, which is among the highest in the nation, without jeopardizing public safety.

"I applaud the House committee, led by Rep. Pam Peterson, for its willingness to advance these much-needed reforms."

Two of the bills were passed today, while the committee approved the other two earlier this month. The bills are:

- House Bill 2472 gives

Gov. Fallin Orders State Agencies to Remove Question about Felony Convictions from Job Appl

02/24/2016 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an [executive order](#) directing state agencies to eliminate questions about prior felony convictions from employment applications.

"Employment after a felony conviction is always a challenge, but the ability to gain employment is a critical

Gov. Fallin Says Oklahoma's Economic Development Efforts Paying off

02/22/2016 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said she is optimistic about recent economic development activity, despite the downturn being experienced in the energy sector.

"During the first six months of the fiscal year, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce reports that 28 companies made plans to invest more than \$2.3 billion over a ramp-up period of three years. These investments will create more than 3,600 new jobs with a projected average annual wage of more than \$64,000," said Fallin. "The attraction and expansion projects secured in the first half of the 2016 fiscal year alone will bring an estimated \$232 million in new annual payroll to the state. That's good news."

In 2013, the Oklahoma Legislature overhauled

Gov. Fallin Warns of Extreme Fire Danger Tomorrow Across Most of Oklahoma

02/17/2016 05:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today called on all Oklahomans to take precautions as the state faces weather conditions that bring extreme fire danger.

“We know from past experience that everyone doing their part can have an effect,” said Fallin. “This is a short duration event with potentially dire consequences. But vigilant residents can reduce the potential impacts.”

The National Weather Service is predicting critical fire weather conditions for Thursday, with a Red Flag Warning and Fire Weather Watch for 71 counties. The six counties not covered are Atoka, Bryan, Coal, Johnston, Marshall and McCurtain.

Under Red Flag Warning and Fire Weather Watch conditions, officials urge extreme caution because a simple spark can cause a major wildfire.

State and federal agencies are making preparations to respond to any wildfire that

OERB Research Grant to Modernize Wastewater Reporting System

02/16/2016 04:45 PM CST

Funding will be used to purchase new system to better collect, analyze data

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin’s Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity today announced a research grant from the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) that will create a new digital system to collect data on wastewater disposal wells in the state.

OERB, which is a member of the coordinating council, stepped up to help provide much-needed technology improvements at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

“This is why I created the council,” said Fallin. “It proves that we have assembled the right group of industry representatives, agencies, regulators and researchers to address Oklahoma’s rise in earthquakes.”

Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment Michael Teague, who heads the council, said the OERB grant will establish a standard format for disposal well operators to submit

Gov. Fallin Statement in Response to Oklahoma Supreme Court Ruling Upholding Scholarship Program

02/16/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement after the Oklahoma Supreme Court upheld the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for

Students with Disabilities Act, which is a scholarship program intended to provide educational options for children with disabilities who live within the state:

“This program saves money for the public school system, while benefiting children with special needs by allowing them to select the educational options that best suits them. This is a victory for students with disabilities across our state and for their families.

“This also is a victory for education in Oklahoma. All students learn differently, so each of them should have the opportunity to attend a school that offers the best environment for success. This can be accomplished through Education Savings Accounts, which I encourage legislators to approve this session, while still protecting school finances.”

Gov. Fallin Rejects Proposed Mental Health Rules Barring SoonerCare Payments to Private Therapists

02/16/2016 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has rejected permanent state mental health rules that would have prohibited paying independent counselors and therapists in private practice to treat Oklahoma children covered by SoonerCare.

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services had proposed the rule change to achieve a necessary budget cut, caused by the recent revenue failure in state government. The agency’s proposed rules supposedly would not have prevented or delayed children from getting the therapy they need because the rules would not have affected any reimbursement for licensed behavioral practitioners who work at agencies.

“These rules, if adopted, would have effectively barred independent licensed behavioral health practitioners from providing mental health services to children who are SoonerCare members,” said Fallin.

An analysis by the governor’s office showed the rules would not save

The Oklahoman: Archbishop Calls for Education Savings Accounts

02/15/2016 11:30 AM CST

By [Rick Green](#) February 13, 2016

Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul S. Coakley would like the state to pick up part of the tab for parents who want to switch their children from public to private school.

"The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and I personally support strong public schools; at the same time, we support parental choice in education," he said in a letter Friday to the Legislature and Gov. Mary Fallin.

"In the present environment, we don't want our Catholic schools to become preserves for the elite or wealthy, but rather be accessible to all."

Under pending legislation for "education savings accounts," or "ESAs," a portion of the money the state spends to publicly school a child would follow that child if a parent chose to enroll the child in a private school.

The education lobby has scuttled such

Gov. Fallin Announces Studies That Show Economic Impact of Oklahoma Tourism at All-Time High

02/15/2016 11:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that three major research studies on the impact of tourism in Oklahoma show direct travel spending reached an all-time high of \$8.9 billion in 2014.

That figure makes travel and tourism the third-largest industry in the state.

“Oklahoma has experienced a tremendous growth in tourism and recreation businesses, destinations and sites which greatly enhance not only our ability to attract visitors and improve Oklahomans’ quality of life but also creates jobs and revenue for our state,” said Fallin. “The money spent at these scenic spots and recreation destinations is a boon for local communities and the state of Oklahoma.”

The studies commissioned by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department revealed that nearly 20.9 million travelers visited the state in 2014.

Visitor spending in Oklahoma generated \$972 million

Gov. Fallin Presents Spotlight for Academic Achievement Award to Sapulpa School

02/12/2016 05:00 PM CST

SAPULPA — Governor Mary Fallin today recognized the teachers, staff, students and parents at Sapulpa’s Holmes Park Elementary School for their efforts to improve the school’s grade in Oklahoma’s A-F School Report Card.

Holmes Park, which has improved its grade from a D+ to a B, is the first school to receive Fallin’s Spotlight for Academic Achievement award.

“Holmes Park is a perfect example of how this grading system should work,” said Fallin. “The dedicated professionals here have worked with students, parents and other

Gov. Fallin Appoints Jarold Callahan to Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agricultural and Mech

02/11/2016 06:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Jarold Callahan to the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges. He will replace Andy Lester, who resigned after being appointed to the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education.

Callahan, of Edmond, will join the board on May 17, once Lester's resignation is effective. He will serve the remainder of Lester's term, which expires in 2018, if his appointment is confirmed by the Senate.

"Jarold is a lifelong rancher with experience in education at the university level, so he will be a valuable addition to the Board of Regents for Oklahoma A&M Colleges," said Fallin.

Callahan, who was born on a ranch in Welch, has 36 years of executive leadership experience. He currently is president of Express Ranches, a large commercial ranching operation headquartered in Yukon. He started his career there in 1996 as chief operations

Aid Denied to Individuals, Business Owners in 9 Counties

02/11/2016 06:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin was notified today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had denied the state's request for assistance for individuals and business owners affected by winter storm, ice, sleet and flooding that began Dec. 26.

The governor had requested individual assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners in nine counties: **Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes, McCurtain, Muskogee, Ottawa, Pushmataha and Sequoyah.**

Oklahoma Emergency Management Director Albert Ashwood said his agency is exploring all possible options, including appealing the decision. In order to appeal, the state would have to provide new information or document additional damage not included in the original request.

The state of Oklahoma has 30 days to appeal today's denial.

On Wednesday, FEMA approved public assistance for 41 counties that were affected by the same storm. Those

Gov. Fallin Appoints James Denton to Incentive Evaluation Commission

02/11/2016 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin announced today she is appointing James Denton to the Incentive Evaluation Commission.

Denton, of Edmond, is the governor's representative to the eight-member commission. He is an auditor employed by a private auditing firm, as required by state statute.

"This commission's work is vital, since there is little evidence Oklahoma has ever studied its tax incentives to determine which ones are beneficial to the state as a whole," said Fallin. "James Denton is ideally suited to aid in this review because of his substantial experience as an auditor."

Denton, a certified public accountant, is president and chief executive officer of Arledge & Associates, an Edmond-based accounting firm. He has been with the firm since 1984, its first year in business.

Denton, a Ponca City native, has led Arledge's audit department since 1987, overseeing the

Aid Approved for 41 Counties to Assist Local Governments, Rural Electric Cooperatives

02/10/2016 07:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the federal government has approved disaster assistance to help with recovery expenses related to the winter storm, ice, sleet and flooding that began Dec. 26.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the request to aid municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm in 41 counties.

The 41 counties approved for public assistance are: **Adair, Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Craig, Custer, Delaware, Dewey, Grady, Grant, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Hughes, Jackson, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Latimer, McCurtain, McIntosh, Major, Mayes, Muskogee, Noble, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Osage, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, Roger Mills, Sequoyah, Tilman, Washita and Woods.**

Fallin also requested individual assistance for homeowners, renters

Gov. Fallin Announces Three Counties Added to Disaster Declaration for November Winter Storm

02/03/2016 06:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state of Oklahoma's

request for public assistance for three more counties dealing with infrastructure damage related to the winter storm that began after Thanksgiving.

With this approval, federal funding is now available in **Bryan, Garfield and Greer** counties to assist municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm, which occurred between Nov. 27 and Nov. 29.

Disaster assistance was approved December 29 for infrastructure repairs and response costs in **Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Grady, Grant, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Logan, Major, Oklahoma, Roger Mills, Washita and Woods** counties.

Preliminary

My Priorities for the 2016 Legislative Session

02/02/2016 06:00 PM CST

As February begins, so too does another legislative session in Oklahoma. This year I had the honor of giving my sixth State of the State address, delivering my executive budget and outlining an agenda for forward progress and economic growth.

These are the topics I addressed and the priorities I believe our legislative session should focus on.

Education Is Biggest Priority

Oklahoma's future sits in the classrooms of today. The education of our students remains my biggest priority in my budget, even in fiscal climates like this. My budget does have some good news for education – it appropriates \$178 million in new money for a permanent \$3,000 teacher pay raise for every teacher in this state. And we can do it without raising the state sales tax rate to the highest level in the nation.

It's also time to merge the administrative costs of the state's underperforming K-8 dependent school

Gov. Fallin Delivers 2016 State of the State Address

02/01/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today delivered the annual [State of the State Address](#) in front of a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature. In it, Fallin focused on the urgent need to improve the state's budgeting process to ensure that legislators can adequately fund priority goals related to education, public safety, health and more. A copy of her State of the State Address is attached to this email. The proposed Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 can be found here: https://www.ok.gov/OSF/documents/bud17_tagged.pdf

Education Is Biggest Priority

Fallin told lawmakers that education of Oklahoma's students remains her biggest priority, with her budget calling for a pay raise for the state's public school

State of Oklahoma Requests Major Disaster Declaration for December Storm

01/29/2016 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government related to the winter storm, ice, sleet and flooding that began Dec. 26.

Fallin requested individual assistance for homeowners, renters and business owners in nine counties, as well as public assistance to aid municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm in 41 counties.

Gov. Fallin Approves Transfer of Emergency Funds to Aid Oklahoma's Earthquake Response

01/28/2016 01:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin announced today she has approved the use of nearly \$1.4 million from the state emergency fund to bolster the efforts of earthquake regulators and researchers in Oklahoma.

The funds will be directed to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) and the Oklahoma Geological Survey (OGS).

Fallin recently asked the OCC and the Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity to determine what state agencies needed to better understand the earthquakes impacting parts of the state. She was presented with a list of needs totaling \$1.387 million in one-time costs.

"I immediately made arrangements for the Corporation Commission and OGS to receive the money necessary to meet those needs," Fallin said. "I'm committed to funding seismic research, bringing on line advanced technology and more staff to fully support our regulators as they take meaningful action on earthquakes."

The

Gov. Fallin Brings Together Former Oklahoma Governors for an Evening at the Governor's Mansion

01/27/2016 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen welcomed home five of Oklahoma’s former governors to their former official residence.

Five of the six living former governors and their spouses attended Tuesday night’s dinner at the Governor’s Mansion. Former Governor David Hall, who served from 1971-75, sent regrets that he could not attend as he is caring for his wife.

It was the first time in recent memory that a governor hosted an event for former governors at the Governor’s Mansion.

“I wanted to bring together our former governors and spouses for an historic gathering to thank them for their service, to reminisce about their service as the chief executive of our state and their memories of living with their families at the Governor’s Mansion,” said Fallin. “It was a fun night with great stories and personal

Gov. Fallin Reappoints Connie Reilly to Regional University System of Oklahoma Board

01/22/2016 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is reappointing Connie Reilly to the Board of Regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma. Reilly originally was appointed to the post in 2007 by former Governor Brad Henry.

Reilly, of Okemah, has served as chairman of the board and participated in search committees that were involved in hiring presidents for five of the six universities the board governs.

“Connie Reilly has earned another term as regent with her meritorious service over the past nine years,” said Fallin. “Her

Gov. Fallin Comments on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

01/15/2016 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding Martin Luther King Jr. Day:

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s message of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity is just as relevant today as it was when he lived. He believed in freedom and equality of opportunity for which the United States of America still stands. I encourage all Oklahomans to join me in remembering the life of Dr. King and take time considering what each of us can do to make his dream come to fruition.”

Martin Luther King Jr. Day will be observed Monday, January 18. The governor’s office will be closed in observance of the holiday.

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Dana Weber to Oklahoma Turnpike Authority

01/15/2016 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin announced today she is appointing Dana Weber to the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. Weber will replace Kevin Hern, who resigned in November.

Weber, of Tulsa, will begin serving on the six-member turnpike authority immediately. Once the Senate signs off on her appointment, she will serve the remainder of Hern's term, which expires in 2021.

"The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority will be well served by Dana Weber's broad business experience," said Fallin. "That will be important as the Turnpike Authority embarks

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Adam Luck to State Board of Corrections

01/15/2016 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin announced today she is appointing Adam Luck to the State Board of Corrections. Luck is replacing J. Matt Tilly, who resigned in October.

Luck, of Oklahoma City, will serve the remainder of Tilly's unexpired term, which runs through 2021. His appointment is subject to Senate confirmation.

"Adam has studied Oklahoma's justice system so he is an ideal choice for the Board of Corrections as we look for ways to reduce the state's prison population," said Fallin. "We need to realize that the current

Gov. Fallin Statement on General Electric Leaving High-Tax Connecticut

01/13/2016 05:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released this statement on General Electric's decision to leave the state of Connecticut because of that state's tax hike on business:

"This is precisely why we know lower taxes influence where businesses go. High taxes are job killers and hurt families' disposable income. Some have suggested that Oklahoma should postpone the 0.25 percent income tax cut that went into effect this month because of the budget shortfall and its impact on the upcoming 2017 fiscal year. The income tax cut's budgetary impact in the upcoming 2017 fiscal year is only a little more than 10 percent of the projected budget hole. Oklahoma would still have over an \$800 million budget hole even if that tax cut hadn't taken effect.

“Up until the energy industry downturn, Oklahoma had the fourth-fastest growing economy in the nation. This tax cut will prove its worth in the long term. Tax policy is long-term

Governor Mary Appoints Phil Albert to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents

01/13/2016 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Phil B. Albert to the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma. He will replace Jon R. Stuart, who has served on the board since 2002.

Albert, of Tulsa, will serve a seven-year term as regent if his appointment is confirmed by the Oklahoma Senate.

“Phil is a proven leader whose business acumen will be beneficial to the board of regents for OU,” Governor Fallin said.

Gov. Mary Fallin Authorizes Transfer of Emergency Funds for Flood Control Repairs

01/12/2016 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today approved the transfer of \$1.8 million from the state emergency fund so Oklahoma could qualify for federal funds needed to repair flood control structures damaged last year.

“These structures are absolutely vital to protect Oklahomans and their property should the state receive record rainfall again like it did last year,” said Fallin.

Fallin praised U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Cheyenne, for his help in securing additional funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“The devastating floods throughout Oklahoma last year emphasized the importance of maintaining and repairing dams and watersheds throughout our state,” said Lucas. “Every dollar devoted to these critical rehabilitation projects will have an extraordinary impact in protecting the lives and property of Oklahomans.”

The agency’s emergency

Governor Mary Fallin Names Kelly Greenough District Judge for Tulsa and Pawnee Counties

01/08/2016 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Kelly Morgan Greenough to a district judge post serving Tulsa and Pawnee counties. Greenough will replace the late Carlos Chappelle, who retired last year.

Greenough, of Tulsa, currently is director of Tulsa County's domestic violence court, which is the first of its kind in Oklahoma. She previously spent more than five years with the Tulsa County public defender's office.

"Kelly Greenough is an experienced litigator who will serve the people of Tulsa and Pawnee counties well," said Fallin. "She has amassed a wealth of legal experience that will make her an excellent judge."

Greenough was responsible for designing and implementing Tulsa County's integrated domestic violence court, which began operating in 2014. She now handles day-to-day operations of the court, along with financial reporting associated with the U.S. Department

Keeping Oklahoma's Momentum Moving Forward

01/05/2016 02:15 PM CST

The New Year has arrived, which means many Oklahomans have made resolutions and personal goals for themselves for 2016. Include me among them.

I'm working on goals for the upcoming legislative session, and in next month's column I'll outline some of my plans for the state. But for now I'd like to go over just a few of the successes my administration had in addressing challenges facing the state in 2015.

If you recall, one of my key goals has been that Oklahoma make improvements in three areas: educational attainment, incarceration and crime, and health. Work still needs to be done in these areas, of course, but inroads have been made this past year.

In education, I held nine meetings across the state on "Oklahoma Works," my initiative to boost educational attainment and better align workforce and education in Oklahoma by developing partnerships between schools, local businesses and other key partners.

The Oklahoman Editorial: Closing State Pension Gaps Is Sound Public Policy

01/04/2016 12:00 PM CST

By The Oklahoman Editorial Board

Published: January 4, 2016

"I know you're not going to be happy."

This is the message Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has relayed to union leaders recently about his efforts to reduce the state's \$50 billion gap between how much is owed in pension obligations and how much the state has on hand. The Wall Street Journal notes that in an effort to end a budget impasse with the Republican-

controlled legislature, Wolf, a Democrat, has agreed to retirement cuts for new state hires and current workers.

This has unions unhappy, naturally, but it mirrors what's happening elsewhere across the country: Democratic politicians going against their longtime allies in labor because continuing with business as usual is unsustainable.

Since 2009, the Journal reports, 25 of the 34 states that had Democratic governors in office “have rolled back

Major Disaster Declaration Approved for November Storm

12/29/2015 05:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for 18 counties related to the winter storm that began after Thanksgiving.

The approval means federal funding is available to assist municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm, which occurred between Nov. 27 and Nov. 29.

Disaster assistance is approved for **Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Grady, Grant, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Logan, Major, Oklahoma, Roger Mills, Washita** and **Woods** counties.

Gov. Fallin Extends State of Emergency Due to Winter Storms, Heavy Rains

12/28/2015 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today extended a state of emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to the winter storm and flooding that continues to impact the state.

Nearly 200,000 homes were still without power Monday afternoon as a result of another round of freezing rain, ice and sleet that struck western and central parts of the state. Heavy rains inundated the eastern part of Oklahoma.

[The state of emergency](#) will help facilitate additional mutual aid, which includes oversized vehicles such as those transporting utility poles to the affected areas.

Fallin’s executive order allows state agencies to make emergency purchases related to disaster relief and preparedness. It is also the first step toward seeking federal aid should it be necessary.

Under the executive order, the state of emergency, which originally was declared on Nov. 29, is

Gov. Fallin Christmas Statement

12/24/2015 09:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement wishing Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and happy holiday season:

“The holiday season is a special and wonderful time of year. As we take time to celebrate with our families and friends this year, I hope we also will reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas and the message of hope and love it carries for us all.

“From my family to yours, have a blessed Christmas and wonderful New Year.”

Gov. Fallin Appoints Michelle Stephens to TSET Fund Oversight Board

12/23/2015 11:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of L. Michelle Stephens to the board of directors of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) Fund. Stephens, of Weatherford, will succeed Lisa Nowlin and serve the remainder of a seven-year term that expires in June 2017.

Stephens, an attorney, previously served on the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services, state Board of Education and state Career Tech Board.

“I am pleased to appoint Michelle Stephens to the TSET board,” Fallin said. “I am confident her depth of experience will serve the board well as it continues its efforts to improve the health of all Oklahomans and provide good stewardship of the tobacco settlement funds.”

Stephens is the governor’s sole appointee to the seven-member TSET board, which is responsible for guiding the use of earnings from Oklahoma’s tobacco settlement trust fund to improve the health and

Gov. Fallin Re-appoints Rick Davis to Board of Regents for Oklahoma A & M Colleges

12/22/2015 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has re-appointed Rick Davis to the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges. He has served on the board since 2011, when he was appointed to fill an unexpired term.

Davis, of Guthrie, is one of the governor's three at-large appointees to the nine-member board, which also includes the president of the Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture and representatives from each of Oklahoma's five congressional districts.

"Rick has done an outstanding job of using his agricultural background to bolster state colleges overseen by the Board of Regents for Oklahoma A&M Colleges," Fallin said. "I am confident he will continue to guide those institutions as they raise the bar for education in our state, ensuring a bright future for their graduates."

Davis' new eight-year term as regent must be confirmed by the Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Appoints Andy Lester to Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

12/22/2015 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she is appointing Andy Lester to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Lester will replace Marlin "Ike" Glass Jr., whom Fallin thanked for his 18 years of dedicated service to the state as a regent. Glass's second nine-year term expires in May.

Lester, of Edmond, has served on the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical (A&M) Colleges since 2007. His appointment requires Senate confirmation

Lester will continue to serve on the A&M board until the Senate approves his appointment.

"Andy has proven himself to be a champion for education," Fallin said. "That is what our state needs as we try to close the skills gap that has left nearly 80,000 jobs unfilled in Oklahoma because of a lack of qualified candidates."

Lester is a partner in the Edmond law firm Lester, Loving and

State of Oklahoma Requests Major Disaster Declaration for November Storm

12/17/2015 05:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government related to the winter storm that began Nov. 25.

If approved, federal funding would be available to assist municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm.

Counties in the request are **Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Grady, Grant, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Logan, Major, Oklahoma, Roger Mills, Washita and Woods.**

According to preliminary damage assessments, the storm resulted in an estimated \$19.7 million in damages and response costs in these counties alone.

The storm resulted in power outages for more than 125,000 homes and businesses statewide, as well as dangerous travel conditions in some areas. The storm is blamed for two

The Ultimate Gift of Love: Being a Foster/Adoptive Parent

12/07/2015 06:00 PM CST

We are in the midst of the holiday season. It's one of my favorite times of the year because it means getting together with family. The First Gentleman and I have six children between us, and at times it can be hectic keeping up with everything that is planned in our family. But I wouldn't trade those busy times for anything.

I can't image what it would be like to be separated from family during the holidays. Or worse yet, have no family.

But there are nearly 11,000 children in Oklahoma's foster care system. These children are in state custody through no fault of their own. They need foster families to love and support them during their time of need.

So I'm asking Oklahomans during this season of giving if they can provide this ultimate gift of love.

Last month I helped the Department of Human Services (DHS) launch a program called Oklahoma Fosters. It's a renewed effort to find foster families for

Gov. Fallin Statement on Resignation of Department of Corrections Director Robert Patton

12/04/2015 04:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the resignation of Robert Patton as director of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC):

"I appreciate Robert Patton's efforts to keep our state prisons safe for both correctional officers and inmates. During his tenure, he worked to reform DOC's internal operations to be more efficient and effective, as well as implementing the Justice Reinvestment Initiative's corrections reform package to emphasize rehabilitation and treatment for non-violent offenders. I regret his departure, but I understand the importance of family and the need to be close to loved ones. I wish him well in his future endeavors."

Gov. Fallin Forms Fact-finding Group to Look at Ways 'Produced Water' Can Be Reused

12/01/2015 04:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the formation of a fact-finding work group to look at ways that water produced in oil and natural gas operations may be recycled or reused instead of being injected into underground disposal wells.

The Water for 2060 Produced Water Working Group will be charged with discussing opportunities and challenges associated with treating produced water for beneficial uses, such as industrial use or crop irrigation, Fallin said. Attention will be focused primarily on how water produced from oil and gas activities in north-central Oklahoma can be reused.

“Opening appropriate and environmentally responsible avenues for beneficial use of reclaimed produced water will require coordination across industry sectors and regulatory agencies,” said Fallin, who made the announcement during the 36th Annual Oklahoma Governor’s Water Conference and Research Symposium underway in

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Winter Storms

11/29/2015 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to the winter storm and flooding that continues to impact the state.

Nearly 100,000 homes were still without power Sunday afternoon as a result of freezing rain, ice and sleet that began Thursday. The state of emergency will help facilitate additional mutual aid, which includes oversized vehicles such as those transporting utility poles to the affected areas.

Fallin’s executive order allows state agencies to make emergency purchases related to disaster relief and preparedness. It is also the first step toward seeking federal aid should it be necessary.

Under the executive order, the state of emergency lasts for 30 days.

Gov. Fallin Thanksgiving Day Statement

11/26/2015 07:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the Thanksgiving Day holiday:

"This Thanksgiving, as Oklahomans we should all take a moment to reflect on all of God's blessings. I am most thankful for the opportunity and the honor to serve as Oklahoma's governor, as well as for my wonderful family and friends.

"I am also grateful we live in a free nation. My thanks go out to all our men and women in the military, who continue to protect freedom at home and abroad.

"Finally, as we prepare to celebrate another Thanksgiving, I'm wishing Oklahomans a safe, happy and blessed holiday."

INCYMI: The Oklahoman Editorial: Insurer's Announcement Is More Evidence of Obamacare's Flaws

11/25/2015 01:45 PM CST

By **The Oklahoman Editorial Board**

Published: November 24, 2015

LIKE Peter Pan, the Affordable Care Act may never grow old. The program is perhaps even more unsustainable than we thought. The same White House assuring us that Syrian refugees will be thoroughly vetted failed to thoroughly vet its own health care plan.

Obamacare is a ticking time bomb. Or, to put in the "Peter Pan" vernacular, it's a ticking crocodile. Its sustainability is chasing it toward a fiscal gangplank.

Further evidence that Obamacare is based on Tinker Bell-style pixie dust rather than solid business principles came last week. UnitedHealth Group, the largest U.S. health insurer, said it can't commit to participating in the program beyond the coming year.

Why? It's unsustainable. There's that word again, the one that Barack Obama and his friends

Gov. Fallin, Supt. Hofmeister to Host Students, Foster Children for Christmas Tree Lighting

11/20/2015 04:00 PM CST

Governor Mary Fallin, Superintendent Hofmeister to Host Students, Foster Children for Christmas Tree Lighting at the Capitol

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin and Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister will be joined by schoolchildren from across the state for the lighting of the Capitol Christmas tree.

The lighting ceremony is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Nov. 30 on the south steps of the Capitol. The governor will give brief remarks before the 30-foot artificial Christmas tree is lit. The tree, a replica of a Douglas fir, has more than 2,500 energy-saving LED lights. The lighting ceremony will take place about 30 minutes earlier than previous years to accommodate students.

Before the lighting ceremony, more than 700 students are expected to decorate 26 small Christmas trees placed inside the Capitol. The students, ranging in grade level from first to fifth grade, will

Gov. Fallin's Feeding Oklahoma Drive Exceeds Goal

11/19/2015 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin's sixth annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive, which ran October 1 through 31, exceeded its goal of raising 2 million meals. In total, the drive collected \$301,159 in donations and 1,369,113 pounds of food, which will provide 2,598,723 meals for Oklahomans struggling with hunger.

"I am thrilled to thank so many generous Oklahomans for stepping up and donating to this year's Feeding Oklahoma Drive," Fallin said. "Because of your generosity, we will provide meals to our hungry neighbors in all 77 counties across the state. Just because the drive has ended and we have met our goal, please do not forget the continued importance of giving. As we enter the holiday season, let's all remember the critical role our food banks play, and continue to stock their shelves."

The Feeding Oklahoma Drive benefited the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma and

Gov. Fallin Calls for Termination of Planned Parenthood Contracts in Oklahoma

11/19/2015 11:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has requested that the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) terminate its contracts with the two Planned Parenthood affiliates operating in the state because of their high rate of billing errors.

Fallin urged OHCA Chief Executive Officer Nico Gomez to consider appropriately terminating contracts with Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma in Oklahoma City and Planned Parenthood of the Heartland in Tulsa. She also asked Gomez to recommend terminating contracts with similar providers found to have a high billing error rate, have had past findings of overbilling, or associate with other providers who do not rigorously adhere to the high standards that are required to be granted access to public funds.

In 2015, the state paid the two Planned Parenthood affiliates \$100,145 for 19,546 claims; the vast majority of Planned Parenthood services qualify for a 90 percent federal match, making the total payment slightly more

Gov. Fallin Names Jay Marks to Communications Office

11/18/2015 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Jay Marks, a longtime journalist, has joined her staff as deputy communications director. Marks began his duties this week, joining Communications Director Michael McNutt.

Marks, of Yukon, is a lifelong Oklahoman. He grew up in Tulsa and earned a journalism degree from Oklahoma State University. Marks spent nearly 20 years as a newspaper reporter, first with the *Sulphur Times-Democrat* and the *Enid News and Eagle*. He worked for almost 10 years at *The Oklahoman*, where he covered mostly courts and business news. Marks launched his own communications firm earlier this year, doing freelance writing and communications consulting, before joining Fallin's staff.

Fallin said Marks' experience and desire to communicate information will serve him well on her staff.

"Jay has dedicated his career to making sure Oklahomans are informed," said

Gov. Fallin Applauds Legislation to Halt President's Plan to Accept Thousands of Syrian Refugees

11/17/2015 09:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded U.S. House Republican leaders for committing to take swift action to draft legislation to halt President Barack Obama's plan to accept thousands of refugees from Syria. House Speaker Paul Ryan said he wants a vote on the matter this week.

"There is a legitimate public safety concern and more oversight is needed of the refugee program," said Fallin, who has demanded that the president suspend accepting Syrian refugees into the United States after last week's terror attacks in Paris. "This is a federal program and states lack any authority to deny refugee resettlement in their jurisdictions."

Fallin and dozens of other governors, Republicans and Democrats, today participated in a conference call with White House officials, expressing concern and questioning the confidence of the data used to screen the background of refugees from Syria. The president said just last

Gov. Fallin Orders Flags at Half-Staff in Memory of Those Killed in Paris Attacks

11/16/2015 05:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today ordered that all American and Oklahoma flags on state property be flown at half-staff in memory of those killed and injured during the terror attacks in Paris.

The flags are to remain flying at half-staff through 5 p.m. Thursday, according to the governor's order. Friday night's mass killings in Paris left at least 129 people dead and injured about 350 others. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the coordinated assault by gunmen and bombers.

Fallin had earlier ordered that American and Oklahoma flags be flown at half-staff Wednesday to honor Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler, who was killed last month while on active duty in Iraq. His burial will be Wednesday at Arlington National Cemetery.

Wheeler, who grew up in Roland, was identified as the first American soldier to die in combat against the Islamic State group in Iraq and applauded as a hero by Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

Gov. Fallin Calls on Obama Administration to Suspend Accepting Syrian Refugees

11/16/2015 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today urged President Barack Obama to suspend accepting Syrian refugees into the United States in the wake of deadly terror attacks in Paris being linked to the Islamic State.

“The Obama administration needs to assure the public that the background checks they are doing are rigorous, and that American lives will not be endangered in the process,” said Fallin. “Until then, I call on the Obama administration to suspend any Syrian refugees into the United States. During these uncertain times, the Obama administration needs to make sure those entering the United States are not terrorists.”

During a U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing last week, FBI Director James Comey said there is a risk bringing anybody in from the outside, but especially from a conflict zone like Syria.

“The American people need to be assured that national security will not be compromised,”

The Oklahoman Editorial: Affordable Care Act: Poor Fiscal Policy and Bad Politics

11/13/2015 04:45 PM CST

By The Oklahoman Editorial Board Published: November 13, 2015

WHEN they passed the Affordable Care Act, Democrats in Congress believed the law would grow more popular as people started receiving benefits. Instead,

opposition remains as strong as ever, and opponents have the upper hand even in states that embraced Obamacare.

Take Kentucky, which was the only Southern state to expand Medicaid under the health law and run a state exchange where people could purchase Obamacare policies. The state's uninsured rate fell from 20.4 percent in 2013 to 11.9 percent by mid-2014.

Yet the people of Kentucky have now elected a Republican governor, Matt Bevin, who promised to turn the state exchange over to the federal government and also campaigned on rolling back Medicaid expansion in some fashion.

The reason for that outcome is simple: Obamacare's costs are exceeding its alleged benefits. Taxpayer expenses are

Gov. Fallin, DHS Kick Off Initiative to Recruit More Foster, Adoptive Parents

11/12/2015 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin along with the Department of Human Services today kicked off the Oklahoma Fosters initiative to recruit more foster and adoptive families for children who are in state custody.

Oklahoma Fosters is a statewide campaign uniting state, tribal and local governments, businesses, nonprofits and the faith-based community to end the foster care crisis in Oklahoma.

“There are nearly 11,000 children in Oklahoma’s foster care system and we desperately need the help of our entire community to care for them,” said Fallin. “These children are in state custody through no fault of their own. They need foster families to love and support them during their time of need.”

Oklahoma Fosters is asking businesses to encourage employees, the faith-based community to encourage congregations and tribes to encourage citizens to consider being a foster or adoptive parent. State agencies and local governments

Gov. Fallin Statement on Veterans Day

11/11/2015 07:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement concerning Veterans Day:

“This Veterans Day, I’m asking all Oklahomans to join me in thanking our veterans for everything they have done for the people of Oklahoma and for this country. We should never forget their dedication and their service.

“My sincerest and deepest thanks go out to every man and woman who has worn the uniform of the United States military, as well as their families. Please join me in

saying a prayer for our men and women in the military and thanking them for their time and sacrifice.”

Gov. Fallin Names Melissa McLawhorn Houston as Oklahoma Labor Commissioner

11/10/2015 12:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced she will appoint Melissa McLawhorn Houston to be the state's labor commissioner until January 2019. Houston, who has been chief of staff and policy adviser for Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt since 2011, will serve the remainder of former Labor Commissioner Mark Costello's term. Costello, who was re-elected in 2014, was murdered in August.

The commissioner of labor is responsible for the enforcement of labor laws that promote fairness and equity in the workforce, including state wage laws, workers' compensation compliance, state Occupational Safety and Health Administration laws for public employers, child labor laws and various other duties. The safety standards division regulates welding practices as well as the installation, operation and maintenance of boilers, pressure vessels, hot water heaters, amusement rides and elevators. The licensing division issues alarm and locksmith, asbestos,

Tulsa World Editorial: Gov. Fallin Proposes Turnpike Improvements that Will Help Tulsa's Growth

11/09/2015 05:45 PM CST

By the Tulsa World's Editorial Writers

Published Sunday, November 8, 2015

Gov. Mary Fallin has rolled out an \$892 million turnpike plan to improve roads across the state, including several critical projects for the Tulsa area.

The most innovative part of the plan is a 2.5-mile stretch of the Gilcrease Expressway in northwest Tulsa, including a bridge across the Arkansas River.

The city and the Indian Nations Council of Governments have been slowly inching forward on Gilcrease construction for years, but the river crossing always has been the roadblock to completion. Its expense simply is beyond the ability of local government to pay for it in any timely fashion.

A toll bridge, combined with innovative bond funding through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation gets the project closer to completion. Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley says construction on

Gov. Fallin Statement on President Obama's Rejection of Keystone XL Pipeline

11/06/2015 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement on today's decision by President Obama's administration to reject the application for the Keystone XL Pipeline:

"It continues to be absolutely mind-boggling that President Obama and his administration will not approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. It's an important driver of economic growth and even President Obama's State Department says it will create over 42,000 jobs. It will also support North American Energy production, which is good for both our economic security and our national security.

"Hopefully, future leadership in the White House will reverse this decision and make energy policy based on common sense instead of political pressure from anti-fossil fuel extremists."

SAVE THE DATE: Nov. 12: Gov. Fallin to Launch Oklahoma Fosters Initiative

11/05/2015 02:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin, with the Department of Human Services, will launch the Oklahoma Fosters Initiative at 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 12, at the Phillips Pavilion on the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion grounds, 820 NE 23rd St., in Oklahoma City. The initiative is to recruit more foster and adoptive families for children who are in state custody in Oklahoma.

Reservations are required to attend. They are nontransferable. To reserve a seat, RSVP at <http://oklahomafosters.eventbrite.com>

Members of the media planning to cover the event are asked to email oklahomafosters@gov.ok.gov.

The Oklahoman Editorial: Reading Scores Show Oklahoma Retention Policy Working

11/03/2015 05:15 PM CST

by The Oklahoman Editorial Board

Published: November 3, 2015

WE'VE had reason to criticize the state of education in Oklahoma, so it's a pleasure when we can highlight improvement. That's the case with the recent release of the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading scores, which showed Oklahoma experienced the *third-largest gain nationally* in fourth-grade reading scores. We only hope lawmakers will now protect the reforms that made this improvement possible.

In 2011, at the prompting of Gov. Mary Fallin and then-state schools Superintendent Janet Barresi, the Legislature passed a law requiring students to repeat the third grade if they read at a first-grade level or lower. Status-quo forces vocally opposed the retention law, which took full effect for students taking tests in spring 2014. Critics claimed retention would only stigmatize children and no meaningful education

Building a More Competitive Oklahoma, One (Giga) Bit at a Time

11/02/2015 04:45 PM CST

In Oklahoma, my administration has focused on diversifying our economy, building our workforce and educating our citizens. We have worked to build an Oklahoma that attracts companies and new industries. I'm happy to say we are succeeding. To continue building on what makes the Sooner State great, we must continue encouraging investments in our technology infrastructure.

President Reagan once said, "There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination and wonder." I believe access to technology is an essential tool to achieve this vision and help communities expand their economic potential. Government leaders, educators, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, state and local chambers of commerce and policy organizations agree: Oklahoma needs networks of ultra-fast, reliable and accessible broadband.

Widespread high-speed broadband can boost local economies in many ways. Investment in physical

Gov. Fallin Concludes Feeding Oklahoma Drive; Preliminary Numbers Confirm Goal Met

11/02/2015 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin successfully concluded her sixth annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive on Saturday, Oct. 31. The month-long drive benefitted the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma and their partner agencies across the state.

Oklahoma consistently ranks among the most food-insecure states in the nation, with more than 656,000 Oklahomans at risk of hunger every day. This year, the

governor's goal was to raise two million meals to help feed hungry Oklahoma families, children and seniors. Preliminary numbers confirm the governor has surpassed this year's goal.

"I am continually impressed by the support and generosity shown by Oklahomans in all 77 counties," Fallin said. "I want to especially thank all the sponsors and the caring people who donated their time and resources to help feed our Oklahoma neighbors during the holiday season."

Final numbers

SAVE THE DATE: Nov. 10: Governor's Energy Conference in Oklahoma City

10/29/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Energy and Environment Michael Teague are pleased to present the fifth annual Governor's Energy Conference, held this year on November 10 at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. The Governor's Energy Conference brings the diverse Oklahoma energy industry together, connecting top policy makers and implementers with industry executives, stakeholders and business leaders from around the state. The conference engages this thriving community through the exchange of information, the promotion of innovation, the power of networking and the demonstration of commitment to the industry, sound policy and the growth and diversification of Oklahoma's resources.

For more information on the conference, including a detailed agenda and registration for individuals and sponsors, visit <http://governorsenergyconference.com/>.

Media interested

Gov. Fallin and Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Launch Expansion and Improvement Project

10/29/2015 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) announced today the launch of "Driving Forward: Investing in Oklahoma's Future," an extensive expansion and improvement plan that will lay the groundwork for the future of turnpike transportation in the state.

"The 'Driving Forward' plan is about ensuring safe travel, relieving congestion to shorten commutes and sustaining economic development for years to come," said Fallin. "As Oklahoma's population grows, it will require a greater commitment to modernizing and improving our transportation infrastructure. Making these investments today will prevent our state from having to respond to a crisis in the future."

The Driving Forward plan will be a total of six large-scale projects that will modernize, enhance and improve safety, reduce congestion and support population growth on the Turnpike system at an estimated

Gov. Fallin: Oklahoma City Selected for Potential Partnership with Google Fiber

10/28/2015 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today celebrated the announcement that Google Fiber will explore bringing ultra high-speed Internet to Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City is one of three new cities selected by Google Fiber for this partnership, a venture that could deliver cable and Internet speeds up to 85 times faster than in most American cities – and position Oklahoma City as one of the most attractive locations in the nation for high-tech startups.

“Today’s announcement that Google is exploring bringing Fiber to Oklahoma City is further validation of the success of our ongoing efforts to bring and keep high-tech companies and entrepreneurs to our great state,” said Fallin. “Google has been an Oklahoma company since 2011, when it invested more than \$700 million in its data center in Mayes County. Google employees know firsthand what makes Oklahoma attractive to businesses looking to relocate or expand. More than 1,000

Gov. Fallin Directs State Agencies to Sell Underutilized Property, Buildings

10/28/2015 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today [filed an executive order](#) directing state agencies to dispose of any underused property and buildings to generate revenue to pay for the maintenance of state buildings and help offset projected state revenue shortfalls. Her order includes undeveloped land as well as unused or underused office buildings, warehouses and residences.

Agencies have successfully identified and sold unused or underused assets in the past. For example, in July of this year the Department of Human Services sold the former Laura Dester Center property to the city of Tulsa for \$955,000. Half of the buildings on the campus were considered underutilized; annual savings as a result of selling those underutilized buildings and not having to pay for such things as maintenance, utilities and landscaping is estimated between \$50,000 and \$63,000.

“Disposing of underutilized

Gov. Fallin Orders State Agencies to Develop Plans for 10 Percent Cut in Nonessential Spending

10/26/2015 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - With 2016 expected to be a challenging budget year, Governor Mary Fallin today issued [an executive order](#) requiring the chief administrative officer of every Oklahoma agency, board and commission to prepare written plans to reduce nonessential expenses by 10 percent for both the remainder of this fiscal year and for the entire 2017 fiscal year, which begins July 1. The executive order does not mandate any spending cuts; rather, it asks agency heads to plan for potential future cuts.

The plans are to include an explanation of how the dollars saved from the reduction will be reallocated to other needs within the agency. The written spending cut plans are due to each agency's respective Cabinet secretary by Dec. 1, according to Executive Order 2015-46 (see attached).

The governor also placed a moratorium on nonessential, taxpayer-funded, out-of-state travel for all state

Gov. Fallin's Communications Director to Step Down

10/26/2015 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin's communications director, Alex Weintz, today announced he will step down from his position on November 13. Weintz is leaving the Fallin administration to lead the communications division within FKG Consulting, an Oklahoma City based public affairs firm that offers government relations and communications consulting services.

"Alex has worked closely with me for almost a decade, and I appreciate his service to my office and to the state," said Fallin. "He has a great strategic mind and a knack for communicating the kind of complicated issues we deal with in state politics. I'm sad to see him go, but glad he has found an exciting opportunity in the private sector."

Weintz has worked with Fallin since January 2007, when Fallin served in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served as her press secretary in Congress before becoming communications director in her gubernatorial

Gov. Fallin Praises Water for 2060 Advisory Council on Final Water Efficiency Report

10/23/2015 07:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In the wake of Oklahoma's worst drought in decades, Governor Mary Fallin today praised Oklahoma's Water for 2060 Advisory Council for its diligent work to develop a blueprint for drought-proofing Oklahoma.

The advisory council's final report will help in achieving the statewide goal of consuming no more fresh water in 2060 than was consumed in 2012. The advisory council was charged with studying and recommending appropriate water conservation practices, incentives and educational programs to improve efficiency of

statewide water usage while preserving Oklahoma's population growth and economic development goals.

"I am pleased to receive the advisory council's final report and recommendations for encouraging prudent water use measures across all of Oklahoma's major water use sectors," said Fallin. "Oklahoma is truly unique in setting such an ambitious goal for water

Gov. Fallin Targets Use, Management of State Aircraft

10/23/2015 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an executive order intended to reduce operating and maintenance costs associated with the state's fleet of airplanes and helicopters.

[Executive Order 2015-45](#) centralizes the custody and control of all state-owned air assets under Oklahoma's public safety commissioner. Agencies like the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control, the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety and the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation would retain ownership of their air assets; however, use of those air assets would be scheduled and coordinated by the public safety commissioner.

The executive order also requires the administrative head of every state agency, board or commission to give advance written notice to the director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) every time plans are made to purchase,

Gov. Fallin Names Payne County Sheriff R.B. Hauf to OSBI Commission

10/21/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Payne County Sheriff R.B. Hauf to serve on the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) Commission.

Hauf is replacing Tulsa County Sheriff Stanley Glanz, who has resigned from the commission. Glanz's unexpired term on the commission ends July 1, 2016. The governor also is appointing Hauf to succeed himself to a full seven-year term when the unexpired term ends next year.

He begins his term immediately on an interim basis. Both appointments require Senate confirmation.

Hauf, of Stillwater, will fill the one sheriff's position on the seven-member commission. In addition to sheriff, the commission has two other law enforcement slots that are filled by a police chief and a district attorney. The other four positions are filled by lay members.

Hauf was elected sheriff of Payne County in 2008 and was re-elected in 2012. Hauf was elected in 2013 to

Oklahoma Receives REAL ID Extension through October 2016

10/14/2015 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS) announced today that Oklahoma has received an extension through October 10, 2016, to meet the requirements in the REAL ID Act. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security informed the state in a [letter](#) that “for the duration of this extension, Federal agencies may accept Oklahoma-issued drivers’ licenses and identification cards for official purposes in accordance with the phased enforcement schedule and existing agency policies.”

“This is great news for Oklahomans and means there will be no restrictions on individuals using Oklahoma licenses to fly or access federal buildings through October 10 of next year,” said Fallin. “In the meantime, I will work this legislative session with the Legislature, DPS, Oklahoma’s Congressional delegation and

Gov. Fallin, Legislators and Law Enforcement Officials to Host “Back the Blue” Rally

10/09/2015 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, legislators and law enforcement supporters are hosting a “Back the Blue” rally to offer support and thanks to law enforcement agencies and officers. The rally is scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12, on the south steps of the state Capitol.

Oklahomans are encouraged to join the rally – dressed in blue – to show their appreciation for law enforcement professionals who risk their lives to protect their communities. Oklahomans also are asked to turn on blue lights that evening in their homes and businesses to show their support for law enforcement.

“Working in law enforcement can be a dangerous job, but it should never be a thankless one,” said Fallin. “I encourage Oklahomans to join us at the Capitol to thank our law enforcement officers for the work they do to keep us safe.”

Gov. Fallin Bets on OU in Red River Rivalry with Texas Gov. Abbott

10/09/2015 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – With the Oklahoma Sooners playing the Texas Longhorns at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas this Saturday, Governor Mary Fallin is doubling down on the “Red River Rivalry” by challenging Texas Governor Greg Abbott to a Charity

Showdown. Laying odds on an OU victory, Fallin has wagered that the loser of Saturday's game must donate food to a charity in the opposing governor's state.

If OU wins, Abbott will donate a shipment of Railhead barbecue in Fort Worth to the City Rescue Mission, an Oklahoma City non-profit that partners with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to provide meals for the homeless. The donation will support Fallin's ongoing Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive.

If UT wins, Fallin and Head Country Bar-B-Q will sponsor 600 meals to be served at the Capital Area Food Bank in Austin, Texas.

"I felt a little bad about accepting this bet because UT doesn't stand a chance," said

Gov. Fallin Names Former Oklahoma First Assistant AG as Special Adviser on Child Welfare

10/08/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has named Tom Bates, who was a longtime assistant in the Oklahoma attorney general's office, as her special adviser on child welfare and Pinnacle Plan implementation.

Bates served 15 years in the attorney general's office, mostly recently from 2012-14 as first assistant to Attorney General Scott Pruitt. His responsibilities included overseeing the more than 90 civil and criminal attorneys and 40 agents employed by the attorney general's office.

As the governor's special adviser, Bates will primarily be responsible for overseeing implementation of the Pinnacle Plan, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services' (DHS) ongoing effort to reform the state's child welfare operations.

"Tom is knowledgeable about the Pinnacle Plan and the legal process surrounding the plan," said Fallin. "I look forward to having his expertise on this

Gov. Fallin Names New Administrator of State LP Gas Board

10/07/2015 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Gary McDonald as administrator of the Oklahoma Liquefied Petroleum Gas Board.

McDonald, of Yukon, begins his new duties immediately on an interim basis. His appointment requires Senate confirmation.

He replaces Bill Glass, who retired after serving 19 years as administrator of the board. The board regulates the liquid petroleum gas (LP gas) industry in the state and issues dealer and manager permits.

Fallin selected McDonald for the post from a list of nominees submitted by the Oklahoma Liquefied Petroleum Gas Board, as required by state law.

Since 1988, McDonald has served as safety code enforcement officer for the Oklahoma Liquefied Petroleum Gas Administration. The staff of the LP gas administration is responsible for executing and enforcing laws relating to the handling, using, storing, selling, distributing, transporting and manufacturing of butane,

Ten Commandments Monument Moves to OCPA

10/06/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin, state Representative Mike Ritze and the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs (OCPA) announced today the relocation of the Ten Commandments monument from the Oklahoma State Capitol to OCPA's campus, located on private property ten blocks south of the capitol complex.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ordered the monument to be removed from the Capitol grounds in June, saying the Oklahoma Constitution prohibited the state from displaying it. The state appealed that decision but could not get the Supreme Court ruling overturned.

Fallin thanked OCPA for housing the monument and said she would work with lawmakers to put a proposed Constitutional change to a vote of the people, allowing the monument to eventually return to the Capitol.

“My thanks go out to OCPA for providing a temporary home for the Ten Commandments Monument that is easily accessible to those visiting the State Capitol,” said

Workplace Silence Leads to Violence; Speak Out and Help Reduce Domestic Violence in Oklahoma

10/05/2015 03:00 PM CDT

By: Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Verizon President Kristi Crum

Domestic violence affects one in four women. Sadly, Oklahoma is ranked sixth in the nation in the number of women murdered by men. This epidemic affects people of all demographics and communities, extending from the home to the workplace.

Statistics like these are why the state of Oklahoma and Verizon have participated in raising awareness on these issues year after year in conjunction with Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Oklahoma recently dropped from third to sixth in the national ranking, but domestic violence is still prevalent. Employers, including both the state of Oklahoma and Verizon, have a very real stake in protecting their employees from this scourge. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates the annual cost of lost productivity in the workplace from domestic violence at more than \$7 million. More than 74 percent of

Governor Fallin Kicks Off Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive

10/01/2015 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today kicked off her sixth annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive with the goal of raising two million meals to help feed hungry Oklahoma families, children and seniors. The month-long food drive will benefit the [Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma](#), the [Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma](#) and their partner agencies across the state.

“Oklahomans consistently prove themselves to be the most caring and giving individuals in the nation,” Fallin said. “In previous years, all 77 counties came together and donated over two million meals in time for the holiday season. This year, we can do even more to benefit Oklahoma’s hungry.”

Oklahoma consistently ranks among the most food-insecure states in the nation, with more than 656,000 Oklahomans at risk of hunger every day. The Regional

Governor Fallin Issues Stay of Richard Glossip Execution While State Reviews Protocol Questions

09/30/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has issued a 37 day stay of Richard Glossip’s execution to address legal questions raised today about Oklahoma’s execution protocols. The stay will give the Department of Corrections and its attorneys the opportunity to determine whether potassium acetate is compliant with the state’s court-approved execution procedures.

“Last minute questions were raised today about Oklahoma’s execution protocol and the chemicals used for lethal injection,” said Fallin. “After consulting with the attorney general and the Department of Corrections, I have issued a 37 day stay of execution while the state addresses those questions and ensures it is complying fully with the protocols approved by federal courts.”

The new execution date will be Friday, November 6.

“My sincerest

Tulsa World Editorial: Board of Corrections Gives Credit Where Credit's Due, and Follows the Law

09/25/2015 11:15 AM CDT

The Oklahoma Board of Corrections should be applauded, not pilloried, for making a common-sense and absolutely correct decision to follow the law and reduce the state prison population.

The policy change, long overdue and recommended by the governor as well as independent justice reform evaluators, could save the agency at least \$2.3 million

over the next 18 months, incentivize inmates to follow rules and make prisons safer for corrections workers.

More than 8,000 inmates are serving sentences for convictions serious enough that they cannot be considered for parole until they reach the 85 percent mark in their sentence. A corrections department rule also prevented them from accruing good-behavior credits until the 85 percent mark instead of accruing credits throughout their sentence. As a consequence, some inmates served up to 93 percent of their sentence, at a significant cost to the state.

'Back the Blue' Pro-Law Enforcement Rally to be Held at Capitol on October 12

09/24/2015 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, legislators and law enforcement supporters are hosting a “Back the Blue” rally to offer support and thanks to law enforcement agencies and officers at 6 p.m. Oct. 12 on the south steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol. Oklahomans are encouraged to join the rally – dressed in blue – to show their appreciation for law enforcement professionals who risk their lives to protect their communities.

“Working in law enforcement can be a dangerous job, but it should never be a thankless one,” said Fallin. “I encourage Oklahomans to join us on Monday, October 12, at the Oklahoma State Capitol to thank our law enforcement officers for the work they do to keep us safe.”

What: “Back the Blue” Law Enforcement Rally

Who: Governor Mary Fallin, legislative leaders, law enforcement

Insure Oklahoma Now Accepting Larger Businesses

09/21/2015 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) announced today that the Insure Oklahoma program is increasing its employer size limit from 99 to 250 employees. The change is effective immediately.

Insure Oklahoma is the state’s premium assistance program that helps businesses and their middle- to low-income employees afford health insurance coverage. Insure Oklahoma’s funding levels can support premium assistance for about 30,000 individuals. Increasing the employer size limit to 250 employees, which is authorized under the program’s federal waiver, would allow Insure Oklahoma to maximize program usage.

Insure Oklahoma launched in 2005 with an initial employer size limit of 25 employees. This is the third time the size limit has been increased.

Governor Mary Fallin said increasing the eligibility limit to 250 employees is part of the state’s efforts to be more business-friendly,

Jari Askins to Take State Court Administrative Post

09/18/2015 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that Jari Askins, special adviser on child welfare and Pinnacle Plan implementation, is leaving her post on October 1 to become the administrative director of Oklahoma’s courts.

The governor in April tapped Askins, a former Oklahoma lieutenant governor, to oversee implementation of the Pinnacle Plan, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services’ (DHS) ongoing effort to reform the state's child welfare operations.

“I appreciate Jari’s hard work these past six months to improve child welfare services and to serve as my special adviser,” said Fallin. “She made a lot of progress in a very short period of time to ensure the Pinnacle Plan was being implemented appropriately. I wish her well in her new position.”

DHS Director Ed Lake praised Askins and cited several of her accomplishments.

“As we expected, Jari has been a

Settlement Reached in Stalled Lake Texoma Development

09/16/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) voted to approve a settlement on the stalled hotel development on former state park land at Lake Texoma.

Fallin, chairman of the CLO, said commissioners during today’s monthly meeting voted to settle lawsuits over the development on Lake Texoma in Marshall County in southern Oklahoma. The settlement involves the CLO, the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation and Pointe Vista Development, LLC, of Oklahoma City.

“This settlement provides a clean and realistic development plan for Lake Texoma and ensures local communities and the state of Oklahoma can benefit from this great natural resource,” said Fallin. “This is a victory for the Texoma community, which has been waiting for years for an agreement and a path forward.”

Key provisions in the settlement include:

- CLO will buy back 50 prime acres

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Court of Criminal Appeals Granting Stay of Execution

09/16/2015 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued this statement after the Oklahoma Court of Criminal appeals today granted a two-week stay of execution to Richard Glossip:

“As I have repeatedly said, court is the proper place for Richard Glossip and his legal team to argue the merits of his case. My office will respect whatever decision the court makes, as we have throughout this process.

“My thoughts and prayers go out to the Van Treese family who has suffered greatly during this long ordeal.”

Gov. Fallin Responds to Request to Delay Execution of Richard Glossip

09/15/2015 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the impending execution of Richard Glossip and the request by his attorneys to delay his execution by sixty days. Richard Glossip was convicted of paying to have his boss, Barry Van Treese, beaten to death in 1997.

“For months, and as part of a larger publicity campaign opposing the death penalty, Richard Glossip’s attorneys have been publicly claiming to have new evidence that exonerates their client. During that time, my office and I have urged them to bring that so-called evidence to the proper venue: a court of law. Not only have Glossip’s lawyers not done so, but they have actively rejected requests from public officials to examine whatever materials they have. His attorneys even refused to share the contact information of so-called ‘new witnesses’ with

THE OKLAHOMAN EDITORIAL: Good News Resulting from Oklahoma Work Comp Reform

09/11/2015 02:30 PM CDT

by The Oklahoman Editorial Board

Published: September 11, 2015

THE law that changed Oklahoma's workers' compensation system has been challenged in court on many fronts by those who prefer the adversarial, attorney-dominated system that was in place for so many years. Yet there are clear signs the new administrative system is working.

The clearest comes in a report from the National Council on Compensation Insurance, which filed an overall loss cost, or claim expense, decrease of 14.8 percent for Oklahoma. This marks the third straight year of declines in this important indicator — by a total of 37.2 percent according to state Insurance Commissioner John Doak.

What's that mean? The State Chamber of Oklahoma says those figures equal a savings of roughly \$148 million for Oklahoma businesses in the

Gov. Fallin Statement on Anniversary of September 11

09/11/2015 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks:

“Fourteen years after the 9-11 attacks, let us pause to remember the innocent victims who were killed as well as their family and friends. Let us also give thanks for the thousands of firefighters, police officers and first responders, as well as those aboard Flight 93, whose heroic actions saved countless lives.

“Today, the United States of America remains the world’s greatest beacon of liberty. We are able to enjoy freedom and prosperity because of the service and sacrifice made by the men and women of our Armed Forces, whom we should continue to keep in our prayers.”

All American and Oklahoma flags on state property are at half-staff until 5 p.m. today to honor the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America.

State Chamber of Oklahoma: Oklahoma Moves Up in Rankings Thanks to Lawsuit Reforms

09/10/2015 05:15 PM CDT

State Chamber of Oklahoma Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Peter J. Rudy
405.235.3669
prudy@okstatechamber.com

Oklahoma Moves Up in Rankings Thanks to Lawsuit Reforms

Institute for Legal Reform jumps Oklahoma nine places, still in bottom half of states

Oklahoma City (September 10, 2015) – Three years after ranking 42nd in the nation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for Legal Reform (ILR), Oklahoma now places 33rd in a nationwide survey of the perception of state civil justice systems by top business attorneys.

“We said at the time that that perception should change with the passage of major reforms in the past few years,” said

Oklahoma Works: Building a Stronger Workforce and More Prosperous State

09/08/2015 02:15 PM CDT

For the next several weeks, I am traveling across the state in a series of meetings promoting a workforce and education initiative called “Oklahoma Works.”

The meetings, co-hosted by the State Chamber of Oklahoma, promote a much-needed dialogue between education professionals and employers in both the public

and private sector. They are designed to answer the questions, “*How can state agencies, schools and businesses work together to better prepare students for the workforce?*” And “*How can we better connect skilled Oklahomans with great jobs and careers?*”

We are looking for regionally specific answers, not one-size-fits-all solutions. We know that in some parts of the state major employers are looking for skills that can be translated to advanced manufacturing and aerospace careers; in other areas of Oklahoma, agriculture or energy-industry related skills are in high demand.

Our goal is to form

Gov. Fallin Fills CareerTech Board Vacancy

09/04/2015 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Robert J. “Bob” Ross to serve on the State Board of Career and Technology Education.

Ross, of Oklahoma City, will represent the State Board of Education. Two appointed members of the State Board of Education, selected by the Governor, serve as ex officio voting members on the Board of Career and Technology Education. Senate confirmation is not required.

Ross replaces Amy Ford. His term expires April 1, 2016.

“Bob Ross is a visionary Oklahoman whose leadership has expanded educational opportunities for our state’s students,” said Fallin. “As a member of the State Board of Career and Technology Education, he will continue to help students gain leadership skills and to achieve postsecondary credentials and certificates in fields that are in demand by Oklahoma’s businesses. I am proud to appoint him to this important

Workers’ Compensation Loss Costs Fall for Third Straight Year

09/03/2015 04:00 PM CDT

News Release

Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John Doak

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 3, 2015

For more information contact:
Carrie Burkhardt
405-521-4525

Gov. Fallin Statement on Labor Commissioner Mark Costello’s Death

08/24/2015 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement regarding Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Mark Costello’s death:

“I was shocked and greatly saddened to hear of Labor Commissioner Mark Costello’s tragic death last night. My prayers and deepest sympathies go out to his family, friends and staff. Oklahoma has lost a dedicated public servant and a good man.

“In honor of Mark’s life and his service to the state, all flags on state property will be flown at half-staff through the end of the week.”

Flags will be lowered later today after an executive order is filed.

Commissioners of the Land Office Distribute Second-Highest Annual Total in State History

08/20/2015 05:00 PM CDT

Commissioners of the Land Office State of Oklahoma

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

August 20, 2015

Oklahoma City, Okla. – The Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) had an exceptional year for funds earned and

Gov. Fallin Adds Cities to “Oklahoma Works” Workforce Initiative Tour

08/18/2015 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced four additional Key Economic Network regional meetings with business leaders, education professionals and others to support the “[Oklahoma Works](#)” education and workforce initiative. Each of the nine events, held at locations across the state during the next several weeks, will be co-hosted by the State Chamber of Oklahoma.

The additional meetings will be in Altus, Shawnee, Woodward and Choteau. Earlier announced meetings are set in Oklahoma City, Lawton, Tahlequah, Ada and Tulsa.

Oklahoma Works is a prosperity-boosting initiative that seeks to increase educational attainment and match skilled workers with rewarding careers. By building local partnerships between state agencies, educational institutions, the business community

and other stakeholders, Oklahoma Works aims to ensure students and adults find rewarding, lucrative careers and businesses

New Oklahoma Law Eliminates Tobacco Use on School Grounds and at Activities

08/17/2015 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - As of August 20, 2015, all Oklahoma public and private schools are to be tobacco-free. The new law will also prohibit anyone from using tobacco in school vehicles and at any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event or activity, including sporting events. House Bill 1685, also known as the 24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act, provides around-the-clock protection from the dangers of tobacco use.

“Tobacco products are the leading cause of preventable death in the state of Oklahoma,” said Governor Mary Fallin. “A lot of tobacco users first form the habit by being around other tobacco users, including friends and parents, when they are young. When I was growing up, it wasn’t unusual to see parents – or high school-aged children – smoking or dipping at sporting events and other school functions. This new law pushes tobacco off our school campuses and ensures our children aren’t picking up an unhealthy and

Gov. Fallin Announces Business Champions for Oklahoma Works

08/12/2015 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced regional leaders from business and industry to support the “[Oklahoma Works](#)” education, workforce and job creation initiative.

Oklahoma Works is a prosperity-boosting job creation project that seeks to increase educational attainment and match skilled workers with rewarding careers. By building local partnerships between state agencies, educational institutions, the business community and other stakeholders, Oklahoma Works aims to ensure students and adults find rewarding, lucrative careers and businesses have access to the highly educated and skilled workforce they need to succeed in today’s modern economy.

To address regional workforce needs, Oklahoma Works establishes nine Key Economic Networks (KENs). Each region has a “business champion” to coordinate local efforts to support Oklahoma Works. Those leaders are listed

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Execution of Richard Glossip

08/10/2015 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today addressed the impending execution of Richard Glossip, a death row inmate convicted of first degree murder. Fallin said the execution, currently set for September 16, will move forward because

Glossip is guilty and because, after 17 years of appeals, the legal process has run its course.

“Richard Glossip has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death by two juries. His conviction and death sentence have been reviewed and upheld by four courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States,” said Fallin. “His actions directly led to the brutal murder of a husband and a father of seven children. The state of Oklahoma is prepared to hold him accountable for his crimes and move forward with his scheduled execution.”

Glossip, who managed and lived in a motel, was convicted of paying a coworker to murder his employer, motel owner Barry Van Treese. Justin Sneed, who was also convicted

Roads to Prosperity: Improving Oklahoma's Transportation Infrastructure

08/04/2015 10:00 AM CDT

Having safe, well-maintained roads and bridges is one of the most basic requirements of a healthy economy. Oklahoma is at the intersection of three major interstate highways, and we rely on a modern, functional and uncongested infrastructure system to transport an enormous quantity of goods across our borders every day. Businesses choose to locate and expand where employees can come and go easily and where they can get their goods to market. Tourists visit (and spend money at) convenient locations that are easily accessible. For commuters, well-maintained roads are a quality-of-life-issue as well as an everyday necessity.

For all those reasons, when I first took office over five years ago I asked Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley to put in place an aggressive plan to improve and modernize our transportation infrastructure.

That plan began with a commitment to dramatically increasing resources for the Department of Transportation (ODOT), which our

Gov. Fallin's Statement on Release of President Obama's Clean Power Plan

08/03/2015 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement regarding President Obama's “Clean Power Plan,” which will require an approximately 32 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from Oklahoma power plants by 2030.

“President Obama's ‘Clean Power Plan’ represents one of the most expansive and expensive regulatory burdens ever imposed on U.S. families and businesses,” Fallin said. “The EPA's new rules will have minimal environmental benefits; they will, however, threaten our fuel diversity and lead to significant increases in utility costs across the country.

“Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has been helping to lead the charge against the White House and the EPA's overreach. I continue to support his efforts in the

courtroom. Oklahoma, not the federal government, knows best how to protect our environment while also supporting our

Gov. Fallin Names William E. “Bill” Flanagan to State Board of Education

07/30/2015 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Claremore Mayor William E. “Bill” Flanagan to the State Board of Education. Flanagan replaces Amy Ford.

Flanagan will serve on an interim basis pending Senate confirmation next year. He represents the 2nd Congressional District on the State Board of Education and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

Flanagan, a retired Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and personal financial specialist, has served as mayor of Claremore since 2013. He served 18 years on the Claremore Park Board and previously served on Claremore’s City Council. In 2004, he was named *Claremore’s Citizen of the Year*.

“Bill Flanagan brings financial expertise and a history of community engagement to the State Board of Education,” said Fallin. “Bill understands the important tasks facing our education community and the need to ensure our students get the

FEMA Denies Disaster Assistance for 19 Remaining Counties

07/29/2015 07:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has denied the state of Oklahoma’s request for [Individual Assistance](#) to aid individuals and businesses in 19 counties that were impacted earlier this year by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds.

The 19 counties denied assistance are **Blaine, Craig, Creek, Custer, Dewey, Garfield, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Jackson, Kay, Major, Muskogee, Osage, Pawnee, Roger Mills, Sequoyah, Washita and Woods.**

FEMA earlier approved 45 counties for Individual Assistance. Public Assistance earlier was approved for all 59 counties that the state had submitted for aid. Aid was for damage that occurred between May 5 and June 22 by storms and floods.

“While I am grateful to FEMA for granting assistance to many in Oklahoma whose homes or businesses were damaged, I am

Gov. Fallin to Launch Statewide “Oklahoma Works” Tour to Support Workforce Initiative

07/29/2015 06:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced a series of Key Economic Network regional meetings with business leaders, education professionals

and others to support the [“Oklahoma Works”](#) education and workforce initiative launched earlier this year. Each event will be co-hosted by the State Chamber of Oklahoma. Five meetings have been scheduled as of now, with more to be announced.

Fallin officially launched Oklahoma Works in her State of the State address in February of this year. The initiative is a prosperity-boosting project that seeks to increase educational attainment and match skilled workers with rewarding careers. By building local partnerships between state agencies, educational institutions, the business community and other stakeholders, Oklahoma Works aims to ensure businesses have access to the highly educated and skilled workforce they need to succeed in today’s modern

Boeing Oklahoma City Expansion Grows Facilities, Business Presence

07/29/2015 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 29, 2015 – Boeing [NYSE: BA] today broke ground on a new 290,000 square-foot facility with space for approximately 800 employees. The new structure, the third in Boeing’s existing campus, will open in summer 2016 and house employees working in engineering, research and development laboratories, and some support staff.

During the groundbreaking ceremony Global Services & Support (GS&S) President Leanne Caret announced that headquarters for GS&S’ Aircraft Modernization and Sustainment (AM&S) division would move to Oklahoma City in the months ahead. This decision transfers approximately a dozen senior management positions to Oklahoma City and reflects the site’s importance to the company.

“We see a bright horizon for the aircraft sustainment business because of the highly trained and motivated workforce we have in Oklahoma City,” said Caret.
“Expanding our presence

Commercial Metals Company Selects Durant, Oklahoma, for New Micro Mill

07/27/2015 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Commercial Metals Company (NYSE: CMC) and the State of Oklahoma today announced that CMC has selected Durant, Oklahoma as the location for construction of its second technologically advanced micro mill.

This new investment in Oklahoma will mirror CMC’s existing micro mill in Mesa, Arizona and will be built with improved technology developed from CMC’s operating experience with the world’s first micro mill, which CMC successfully commissioned in Mesa in 2009. The addition of a second micro mill to CMC’s portfolio of highly efficient, customer focused and cost effective steel production facilities will enhance CMC’s position as a leading supplier of long products in the U.S. market.

Joe Alvarado, Chairman, President and CEO of CMC, said, “The location of the mill

in Durant, Oklahoma, 80 miles north of Dallas, Texas, will allow us to better serve a growing North Texas

Federal Assistance Granted for 12 More Oklahoma Counties Devastated by Storms, Floods

07/24/2015 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [has approved](#) the state's request for disaster assistance for 12 more Oklahoma counties impacted by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds. The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners affected by severe storms in **Adair, Cherokee, Coal, Delaware, Garvin, Hughes, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Murray, Ottawa and Pontotoc** counties. Thirty-three counties were previously approved for Individual Assistance. An additional 19 counties have been requested, but have not yet received a determination from FEMA.

Fifty-nine counties have been approved for Public Assistance funding to help municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the

Gov. Fallin Announces OETA Board Member Appointments

07/24/2015 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointments of Richard Beck and Garrett King to the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA) Board of Directors.

Beck, of Claremore, is serving a seven-year term that began July 1. He succeeds Lisa Harbison.

King, of Weatherford, is filling out the remainder of the term of Jerry Nye, who passed away. King's term will expire June 30, 2019.

Beck fills an appointment slot that is required to be from the 2nd Congressional District and King fills the position from the 3rd Congressional District. The governor has seven appointees on the 13-member board.

Beck is vice president for academic affairs at Rogers State University (RSU). He has served since 2008 on the Community Advisory Board for RSU Public Television.

“Richard Beck is an experienced administrator who has worked extensively with public television. He will be an excellent addition to the

Tulsa World Editorial: Fallin Authorizes Arming Oklahoma Guardsmen

07/22/2015 05:00 PM CDT

By World's Editorial Writers

Posted: Wednesday, July 22, 2015 12:00 am | Updated: 1:47 am, Wed Jul 22, 2015.

In the wake of a terrorist attack on two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Gov. Mary Fallin has authorized Oklahoma National Guard troops to be armed.

Four Marines and a sailor were killed in Chattanooga, the latest in a series of attacks on domestic military facilities by radicalized Muslim terrorists.

Fallin's orders are sensible and appropriate, and the Pentagon ought to consider taking similar steps. It's wrong to put our military personnel into danger without any means of self-defense.

It's important to note that Fallin did not order guardsmen routinely armed. Rather, she authorized Oklahoma's Adjutant

FEMA Extends Disaster Incident Period for Flooding, Storm Damage in June

07/21/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has expanded the disaster incident period by 18 days in June to include additional flooding and storm damage to public and private property.

FEMA's Disaster Incident Period of May 5 – June 4 has been extended to June 22 for both Individual Assistance and Public Assistance to reflect damages to public and private property.

Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) officials made the extension request last week, stating that Oklahoma has been besieged by severe weather for more than two months. In May, the state experienced more than 25 tornadoes, baseball-size hail and record-breaking rainfall, which set the stage for multiple rounds of flooding and other damaging severe weather that followed.

On June 16, Oklahoma was hit with more flooding, straight-line winds and tornadoes. River levels reached all-time highs in many

Oklahoma National Guard Finalizing Plans to Arm Some Soldiers and Airmen

07/21/2015 03:30 PM CDT

News from the Oklahoma Army National Guard

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July 21, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Oklahoma National Guard finalizing plans to arm some Soldiers and Airmen

Oklahoma City - The Oklahoma National Guard (OKNG) is vigorously staffing guidelines and implementation measures for immediately arming certain military personnel at National Guard facilities across the state. Additionally, force protection and security measures for every facility under the control of the National Guard are being reevaluated and enhanced, if necessary.

The OKNG is taking these actions in accordance with Governor Mary Fallin's Executive Order issued Friday to the Adjutant General for Oklahoma, Maj. Gen. Robbie L. Asher, authorizing the

[The AP: Medicaid enrollment surges under expanded program; states worry about paying for added care](#)

07/20/2015 04:45 PM CDT

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA — More than a dozen states that opted to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act have seen enrollments surge way beyond projections, raising concerns that the added costs will strain their budgets when federal aid is scaled back starting in two years.

Some lawmakers warn the price of expanding the health care program for poor and lower-income Americans could mean less money available for other state services, including education.

In Kentucky, for example, enrollments during the 2014 fiscal year were more than double the number projected, with almost 311,000 newly eligible residents signing up. That's greater than what was initially predicted through 2021. As a result, the state revised its Medicaid cost estimate from \$33 million to \$74 million for the 2017 fiscal year. By 2021, those costs could climb to a projected \$363 million.

"That is a

[Gov. Fallin Welcomes New Pardon and Parole Board Director](#)

07/20/2015 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded today's hiring of DeLynn Fudge as executive director of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board.

Fudge, who has worked the past 14 years as federal grants division director for the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, begins her new duties Aug. 10. Fudge previously worked 10 years coordinating a statewide training program for

professionals on issues surrounding child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence for the Oklahoma Department of Health's Office of Child Abuse Prevention.

"DeLynn Fudge has a long record of successfully working with federal, state and local partners on a wide range of issues, including child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, drug enforcement, violent crime investigations and residential substance abuse treatment for incarcerated offenders," said Fallin. "She understands the criminal justice system and is a skilled manager who will provide guidance and

In Wake of Attacks, Gov. Fallin Authorizes Adjutant General to Arm Full-Time Military Personnel

07/17/2015 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today authorized Oklahoma's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Robbie L. Asher, to arm full-time personnel at installations like the military facilities that were attacked Thursday in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"Four unarmed Marines were killed in what appears to be a domestic terrorist attack," said Fallin. "It is painful enough when we lose members of our armed forces when they are sent in harm's way, but it is unfathomable that they should be vulnerable for attack in our own communities. For that reason, I want to make sure that our National Guardsmen are authorized to arm themselves at our military facilities."

Fallin issued an [executive order](#) allowing Asher to arm certain full-time personnel in military installations throughout Oklahoma with weaponry as he deems necessary "to adequately provide for

Gov. Fallin Applauds Oklahoma Corporation Commission for Regulations Addressing Seismic Activity

07/17/2015 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the Oklahoma Corporation Commission for expanding regulations regarding wastewater disposal wells (see Corporation Commission release below for more details). Governor Fallin released the following statement:

"The Corporation Commission is taking active and appropriate steps to address seismic activity. Hundreds of disposal wells have already been plugged back or had their volumes reduced. The directive from the Commission today will affect over 200 more wells.

"Reducing seismic activity requires a cooperative effort. The energy industry understands the need to protect homes and businesses and is voluntarily providing the Oklahoma Geological Survey and the Governor's Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity with data and research assistance. The industry has also voluntarily cut injection rates at many wells. The state will continue to work with all parties to pursue

Gov. Fallin Statement on President Barack Obama's Visit to El Reno Prison

07/16/2015 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today regarding justice reform concepts outlined by President Barack Obama after his visit to a federal penitentiary in El Reno, Oklahoma:

“While we have our political differences, I appreciate President Obama taking the time to visit Oklahoma and I hope he enjoyed his stay. It is always an honor for Oklahoma to host the president of the United States.

“During his time here, the president focused many of his remarks on our criminal justice system. There is an emerging bipartisan consensus that our justice system must be ‘smart on crime’ as well as tough on crime. For individuals with mental health and addiction issues, for instance, we need to do a better job of offering treatment and supervision as alternatives to prolonged incarceration. The president and I have some common ground on this issue, as do some Republican presidential candidates as

The Oklahoman Editorial: National Report Gives Oklahoma Government Finances a High Mark

07/13/2015 02:00 PM CDT

By [The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#) Published: July 13, 2015

OKLAHOMA lawmakers have slogged through several tough budget years, and officials predict next year won't be much better. Yet a new national report suggests Oklahoma is among the better-run state governments, financially speaking. So things could definitely be worse.

Research from the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, authored by senior research fellow Eileen Norcross, ranks each U.S. state's financial health based on short- and long-term debt and other key fiscal obligations, including unfunded pensions and health care benefits.

Norcross concluded Oklahoma ranks ninth-best for fiscal solvency, outperforming every state in the region.

The state fared well in several categories. In the area of “cash solvency” — Does a state have enough cash on hand to cover short-term bills?

Aid Approved for Five More Counties to Assist Local Governments, Rural Electric Cooperatives

07/10/2015 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the federal government has approved disaster assistance for an additional five Oklahoma counties to help with storm and flooding recovery expenses.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the request, one day after the governor and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) submitted the request for **Delaware, Greer, Harmon, Mayes and Nowata** counties.

The federal funds may be used to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with damages caused by storms and flooding between May 5 and June 4.

To date, 59 counties have been approved by FEMA for Public Assistance.

Thirty-three counties have been approved by FEMA for Individual Assistance, which would make available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business

Insure Oklahoma Funded Through 2016

07/10/2015 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) announced today that federal funding for the Insure Oklahoma program has been secured through the end of 2016.

Insure Oklahoma is the state’s premium assistance program that helps businesses and their modest and low-income employees afford health insurance coverage. The program, which has been in operation since November 2005, currently serves 17,923 Oklahomans with more than 3,700 businesses participating.

“This funding extension is great news for the thousands of working Oklahomans and small businesses that rely on Insure Oklahoma for affordable health insurance options,” said Fallin. “Our goal moving forward continues to be securing a permanent extension for this successful, Oklahoma-based program.”

Insure Oklahoma is funded by state tobacco tax matched by federal Medicaid dollars. OHCA received

Gov. Fallin Applauds Pentagon Decision to Expand Mission of Fort Sill

07/09/2015 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said the Pentagon made the right decision by preserving and adding to current force levels at Fort Sill.

“Fort Sill being spared cuts is certainly great news for Lawton, Fort Sill and the entire state,” said Fallin. “Fort Sill is more than just an employer here in Oklahoma – the men and women of Fort Sill are part of our Oklahoma family.”

The Army, which must reduce its active-duty ranks by 40,000, announced today that Fort Sill will gain 219 active-duty slots over the next two years. Posts in other states are absorbing thousands of lost positions.

The restructuring will mean new air defense and field artillery battalions at Fort Sill.

“Fort Sill, in addition to being an important part of our state’s economy, is a key asset in our nation’s defense,” Fallin said. “The Pentagon made the right decision to preserve current force

Gov. Fallin Requests Public Assistance for Five More Counties

07/09/2015 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant public assistance for five additional counties impacted by tornadoes and flooding that began May 5 and ended June 4. If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

Counties in the request are: **Delaware, Greer, Harmon, Mayes and Nowata.**

Fifty-four counties were previously approved for Public Assistance.

Thirty-three counties were previously approved for Individual Assistance, which would make available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious

The Ten Commandments Monument: A Fitting Tribute to History and Shared Values

07/07/2015 01:15 PM CDT

In 2009, Governor Brad Henry signed a bill allowing the installation of a small, privately funded Ten Commandments monument outside the Oklahoma State Capitol. Legislators and supporters of the monument intended it as a tribute to the importance of the Ten Commandments in our history and our system of laws.

Celebrating the historical importance of religions and religious values is not a new idea. Our nation is steeped in references to God and the rights He bestows on all men and women.

The Declaration of Independence clearly states the rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” are inalienable and bestowed on all, not by the government or by men, but by our “Creator.” Our currency has the motto “In God We Trust” printed on every bill. The United States Supreme Court

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Future of Oklahoma’s Ten Commandments Monument

07/07/2015 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding Oklahoma’s Ten Commandments monument, which will remain at the Oklahoma State Capitol while legal appeals and potential legislative and constitutional changes are considered:

“The Ten Commandments monument was built to recognize and honor the historical significance of the Commandments in our state’s and nation’s systems of laws. The monument was built and maintained with private dollars. It is virtually identical to a monument on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol which the United States Supreme Court ruled to be permissible. It is a privately funded tribute to historical events, not a taxpayer funded endorsement of any religion, as some have alleged.

“Nevertheless, last week the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled Oklahoma’s Ten Commandments monument was impermissible. Their decision was deeply disturbing to many in our

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Independence Day

07/04/2015 05:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a happy Independence Day:

“I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Independence Day, and I encourage everyone to remember our current and former military personnel who make this day possible. As Oklahomans, we appreciate their sacrifice and love of country that have allowed us to live in the most free and most prosperous nation on Earth.”

Federal Assistance Granted for Nine More Oklahoma Counties Devastated by Storms, Floods

07/02/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for nine more Oklahoma counties impacted by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds. The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners affected by severe storms that occurred from May 5 to June 4 in **Carter, Jefferson, Latimer, Mayes, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Pushmataha, Stephens and Tulsa.**

Twenty-four counties were previously approved for Individual Assistance. An additional 28 counties have been requested, but have not yet received a determination from FEMA.

Fifty-four counties have been approved for Public Assistance funding to help municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

Fallin continued to encourage individuals and

Governor Mary Fallin Names Leah Edwards District Judge for Garvin and McClain Counties

07/02/2015 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Leah Jo Edwards as the district judge for Garvin and McClain Counties. Edwards, of Lindsay, succeeds Judge Greg Dixon, who resigned.

Edwards has served as the first assistant district attorney in Grady County since 2013. She previously served as a Grady County assistant district attorney.

As first assistant district attorney, Edwards managed employees and dockets of the Grady, Stephens, Caddo and Jefferson County district attorney offices while also trying criminal felony and misdemeanor cases.

“Leah Edwards will serve residents of Garvin and McClain Counties well,” Fallin said. “She is a proven and effective litigator in both public and private matters. She has a wealth of courtroom experience that she brings with her, which will serve her well in her new role.”

Edwards also was an associate and then a partner at the Park, Nelson,

Gov. Fallin Orders Review, Update of State’s Alzheimer’s Disease Plan

06/30/2015 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has ordered a review of the state’s plan for Alzheimer’s disease, instructing the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) to seek improvements in services and care.

The governor issued an [executive order](#) instructing the Aging Services Division of DHS, in consultation with the Oklahoma chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, to review and revise the state’s plan for dealing with Alzheimer’s disease, which was developed in 2009.

“Thousands of Oklahomans and their families are affected each year by Alzheimer’s,” said Fallin. “As this disease’s impact continues to increase, so does the need to review and update Oklahoma’s plan to ensure we are able to effectively help these Oklahomans.”

Mark Fried, president and chief

Statement on the Supreme Court’s Decision to Overturn EPA Regulations on Power Plant Emissions

06/29/2015 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the U.S. Supreme Court’s opinion in *Michigan v. Environmental*

Protection Agency, in which the court struck down certain EPA-imposed regulations on power plant emissions:

“As Justice Scalia noted today, the EPA regulations in question would have imposed a \$10 billion a year cost for power plants. The EPA issued these edicts with no thought as to the economic consequences of its regulatory scheme, which would have dramatically raised utility rates. Today’s decision is a victory for American families and businesses that would have faced skyrocketing costs because of unreasonable rules and regulations.”

Gov. Mary Fallin Comments on Supreme Court Ruling Upholding Oklahoma’s Lethal Injection Protocol

06/29/2015 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today regarding the U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Glossip v. Gross* that upheld as constitutional Oklahoma’s lethal injection protocol:

“The Constitution is clearly not intended to prohibit the death penalty by lethal injection or the use of the sedative midazolam. I appreciate the Court’s ruling, which upholds the letter and the spirit of the law as it is written. My thanks go out to Attorney General Scott Pruitt, Solicitor General Patrick Wyrick and their legal team for aggressively and successfully representing the state on this issue.”

The Attorney General’s Office, pursuant to state law, will notify the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals that the court is now able to set execution dates for Richard Glossip, John Marion Grant, and Benjamin Robert Cole.

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on King v. Burwell Ruling

06/25/2015 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement in response to the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *King v. Burwell*:

“The Supreme Court’s decision today in *King v. Burwell* means that taxpayers will be, for the time being, stuck with a law that is deeply flawed, disruptive to the lives of American families and a destructive force in our economy.

“As I and others have argued for years, states need flexibility to pursue their own health care solutions tailored to the needs of their constituents; Obamacare does the opposite by pursuing one-size-fits-all policies. Health care decisions need to be left to doctors and patients; Obamacare erodes that relationship and replaces it with decisions made by bureaucrats. Successful health care reform would make health care less expensive and would focus on improved health; but Obamacare has led to ballooning insurance premiums shouldered

Gov. Fallin Requests Individual Assistance for 26 More Oklahoma Counties

06/23/2015 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) today requested the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant Individual Assistance for 26 additional counties impacted by tornadoes and flooding that began May 5. If the request is approved, the designation would make available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs.

The 26 counties added to the request are: **Adair, Blaine, Cherokee, Coal, Delaware, Dewey, Garfield, Garvin, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Hughes, Jackson, Kay, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Major, Murray, Muskogee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Roger Mills, Sequoyah and Washita.**

To date, FEMA has approved Individual Assistance

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Higher Education Appointments

06/22/2015 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to education-related boards. All of the following appointees received Senate confirmation during the 2015 Legislative Session:

Northern Oklahoma College Board of Regents

Stanley Brownlee, of Enid, is replacing Lynn Smith and will serve a five-year term beginning July 1. Brownlee is a consultant at Wymer Brownlee, a financial services company. He previously served as president of the Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce, president of the board of directors at St. Mary's Hospital, chairman of the joint industrial foundation and chairman of the board of directors of the Hedges Regional Speech and Hearing Center. Brownlee hosts an academic quiz bowl for students in fourth through sixth grades and tutors at the Carver Early Childhood Center. He is a member of the Enid Public School Hall of Fame. Brownlee received a bachelor's degree from the

French connection: Governor, others pitch state at Paris Air Show

06/19/2015 09:15 AM CDT

By: Dale Denwalt The Journal Record

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin, along with a delegation of Commerce Department and business executives, is wrapping up a European fishing trip to snag new aerospace business.

Fallin and the delegation spent several days at the Paris Air Show, which offered them a chance to sit down with industry executives from the world's largest aviation companies. Officials were tight-lipped about which commitments the delegation

secured or lost. Vince Howie, director of aerospace and defense at the state Commerce Department, said some announcements will be made next week.

“We’ve already had some wins for the state,” Howie said. “It’s been a great show for us.”

The biennial air show at Le Bourget airfield in Paris was the first stop

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Education Appointments

06/16/2015 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to education-related boards. All of the following appointees received Senate confirmation during the 2015 Legislative Session:

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Ann Holloway, of Ardmore, is being reappointed and will serve a nine-year term. She is a managing member of EAH, an investment firm. She previously served a nine-year term on the board of regents for the Regional University System of Oklahoma. Holloway received a bachelor’s degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma Board of Regents

G.T. Bynum, of Tulsa, replaces John Nelson and will serve a seven-year term. He is a managing partner at Capitol Ventures, a government relations firm. He also serves as a member of the Tulsa City Council. Bynum currently serves on the board

Governor Mary Fallin Requests Public and Individual Assistance for More Oklahoma Counties

06/16/2015 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) have requested the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant public assistance for 14 additional counties hit hard by tornadoes and flooding that began May 5. If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

The 14 counties added to the request today are: Craig, Custer, Dewey, Grant, Jefferson, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Major, Noble, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Roger Mills and Wagoner. To date, FEMA has approved public assistance for 40 counties requested by Fallin and OEM.

Fallin and OEM also requested individual assistance – which makes federal assistance available for housing and business repairs – for five additional counties. Those counties include: Creek, Mayes, Pontoc, Rogers and

Federal Assistance Granted for Seven More Oklahoma Counties Devastated by Storms, Floods

06/12/2015 07:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for seven more Oklahoma counties hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds. The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners affected by severe storms that occurred from May 5 to June 4 in **Beckham, Caddo, Canadian, Marshall, McIntosh, Seminole, and Wagoner counties.**

Thirteen counties were previously approved for Individual Assistance and an additional ten counties have been requested but have not yet received a determination from FEMA.

Forty counties have been approved for Public Assistance funding to help municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

Fallin continued to encourage individuals and

Gov. Fallin and OEM Add Five Counties to Request for Individual Aid from FEMA

06/12/2015 06:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) announced today they have submitted five additional Oklahoma counties to a request for disaster assistance to aid individuals and business owners who sustained damage from recent flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds. The additional counties where individual assistance is being sought are **Choctaw, Cotton, Jefferson, Okmulgee and Stephens.**

If the request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is approved, the designation would make available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs.

To date, FEMA has approved public assistance for all 40

Aid Approved for 15 More Counties to Assist Local Governments, Rural Electric Cooperatives

06/11/2015 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the federal government has approved public assistance for an additional 15 Oklahoma counties to help with storm and flooding recovery expenses.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the request, one day after the governor and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) submitted the request for **Adair, Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Creek, Garvin, Jackson, Logan, McCurtain, McIntosh, Marshall, Muskogee, Pushmataha, Sequoyah and Washita** counties.

“I appreciate the federal government’s quick response to our request,” said Fallin. “This will help rebuild our damaged roads and bridges as well as offset other costs associated with responding to flood and storm damage.”

The federal funds may be used to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated

Governor Mary Fallin and OEM Add 15 Counties to Request for FEMA Aid

06/10/2015 03:00 PM CDT

Funds Could Help Rebuild Damaged Roads and Bridges

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) announced today they have submitted 15 additional Oklahoma counties to a request for public assistance from FEMA related to storm and flooding recovery expenses. The counties include: **Adair, Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Creek, Garvin, Jackson, Logan, McCurtain, McIntosh, Marshall, Muskogee, Pushmataha, Sequoyah and Washita**. If the request is approved, federal funding would be made available to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with damages caused by last month’s storms and flooding.

To date, twenty-five counties have been approved by FEMA for public assistance. Thirteen counties have been approved by FEMA for individual assistance.

Fallin continued to

Governor Mary Fallin to Lead Oklahoma Delegation to 2015 Paris Air Show

06/10/2015 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s foreign direct investment team announced today that Fallin will lead an Oklahoma delegation to the upcoming Paris Air Show from June 15-20, 2015. Delegations from 11 U.S. states will be present at the air show along with eight U.S. governors. Governor Fallin’s travel will be paid for in full by the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, a private organization that supports economic development.

Secretary of Commerce and Tourism Deby Snodgrass and Secretary of Science and Technology Stephen McKeever will join Fallin at the aerospace show.

“We’re thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase Oklahoma as a top destination for the global aerospace industry,” said Gov. Fallin. “We believe Oklahoma’s business climate, strong economy, educated workforce and high quality of life make it an obvious choice for both

Tulsa World: Gov. Mary Fallin touts training and resources at Tulsa job fair

06/10/2015 10:00 AM CDT

Fallin visits Tulsa for the third of three job fairs across the state.

By RANDY KREHBIEL World Staff Writer

Gov. Mary Fallin spent the larger part of the first five months of 2015 trying to patch together a fiscal year 2016 budget that accounts for a \$611 million drop in general revenue.

Now, with the budget written and the Legislature adjourned, Fallin says she’s trying to address the problem another way — by putting people to work.

“I warned my commerce secretary (Deby Snodgrass) months ago to get ready because I want to follow and tackle every job I can, especially because of the depression in the energy sector,” Fallin said Tuesday at Tulsa

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Nine More Counties Approved by FEMA for Public Aid

06/09/2015 04:15 PM CDT

Funds Will Help Rebuild Damaged Roads and Bridges

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved public assistance for nine more Oklahoma counties dealing with infrastructure damages in the wake of storms and heavy flooding. The counties approved today include: Canadian, Carter, Choctaw, Coal, Le Flore, Love, Murray, Okmulgee and Pottawatomie.

To date, twenty-five counties have been approved by FEMA for public assistance. Thirteen counties have been approved by FEMA for individual assistance.

Fallin continued to encourage individuals and business-owners whose property was damaged between May 5 and June 4 by storms and flooding to report those damages to FEMA by calling **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** regardless of what county they are located in. She stressed that damage assessments are

Public Assistance Approved for 16 Oklahoma Counties

06/04/2015 06:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced this evening that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved 16 Oklahoma counties for public assistance.

The counties are Atoka, Bryan, Cleveland, Cotton, Grady, Haskell, Hughes, Johnston, Latimer, McClain, Okfuskee, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Seminole, Stephens and Tillman.

The designation will deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

Federal Assistance Granted for Ten More Oklahoma Counties Devastated by Storms, Floods

06/04/2015 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for 10 Oklahoma counties hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds. The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners affected by severe storms that have occurred since May 5 in Atoka, Bryan, Comanche, Johnston, Kiowa, Le Flore, McClain, McCurtain, Pittsburg, and Pottawatomie counties. Cleveland, Grady and Oklahoma counties have already been approved for Individual Assistance.

The designation makes available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs.

Additionally, Fallin and the

Gov. Fallin Signs Law Regarding the Release of Police Body Camera Footage

06/04/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a bill that governs the public release of video from body cameras worn by law enforcement officers.

House Bill 1037, which received bipartisan legislative support, was crafted with input from the media, law enforcement officials and prosecutors. All parties agree that some footage from police body cameras should be available to the press and public. However, unlike dashboard cameras on police cars, body cameras enter the homes and private spaces of residents, creating privacy concerns.

HB 1037 allows for the release of body cam videos with some exceptions. A video can be withheld if it depicts a death, unless that death was caused by a law enforcement officer. It also allows the redaction of incidents of great bodily harm and severe violence, unless the acts were caused by law enforcement. It also allows the withholding of footage depicting, nudity, minors, informants, sex crime victims,

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Education Improvement Bills

06/03/2015 04:15 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Education Improvement Bills

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed a number of education bills designed to promote early learning and literacy, improve teacher evaluations, and other items.

One closely watched piece of legislation, Senate Bill 630, was signed today. SB 630 extends for three years the use of reading teams meant to evaluate student literacy levels under the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA). It also begins the use of reading sufficiency teams earlier, in the first grade, to identify children who are struggling to read at grade-appropriate level. Previously, the use of reading teams began in the third grade.

The RSA is designed to ensure that children are able to read at grade-appropriate level before they reach the fourth grade. The RSA uses standardized tests to evaluate student reading performance. SB 630 raises the bar for student literacy, now requiring

Rebuilding After a Month of Storms

06/01/2015 04:15 PM CDT

For many Oklahomans dealing with flooding, storms and tornadoes, May was a difficult month.

In the past few weeks, eleven Oklahomans lost their lives due to storms. In the period from May 5 to May 10 alone, over 828 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

As the waters recede, we know we will find more damage. Already a preliminary survey has identified more than \$13 million in uninsured infrastructure losses. In some counties, flooding was so bad that it rendered roads and bridges impassable.

The damage is significant, and recovery will not happen overnight. But it will happen.

Federal, state and local resources are all being used to rebuild and recover. Generous corporations – like Google and Walmart – have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to relief efforts; and organizations like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Southern Baptists are all providing assistance to those displaced by storms and

Gov. Fallin Requests Federal Aid for Individuals and Businesses in Thirteen More Counties

06/01/2015 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration for thirteen Oklahoma counties hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds that have occurred since May 5. If approved, individuals and business owners affected by storms in these counties would be eligible for federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs. The counties include: Atoka, Bryan, Comanche, Johnston, Kiowa, Le Flore, McClain, McCurtain, Okfuskee, Pottawatomie, Pittsburg, Pushmataha and Tulsa. Additional counties may be added to the request as damage assessments are completed.

“In the last few weeks, I have met with families whose homes or businesses have been washed away by flooding or severely damaged by

Gov. Fallin Signs Budget Bill, Highlights Successes in 2015 Legislative Session

06/01/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed the Fiscal Year 2016 budget bill (HB 2242) into law, calling it a fiscally responsible blueprint for state government and praising the Legislature for closing a \$611 million shortfall without cutting funding for K-12 education. The FY 2016 appropriated budget will be \$7,138,920,521, which is \$74.3 million, or 1.03 percent, less than FY 2015’s appropriated budget.

“I’m proud legislators and I were able to pass a budget in challenging times that shields common education, our largest and one of our most important expenses, from budget cuts,” said Fallin. “Under this budget, approximately 51 cents of every dollar appropriated by state government will continue to go toward education. The budget

also protects – and in some cases increases — funding for health and public safety while preserving all funding necessary to keep intact the state’s eight-year

Gov. Fallin Requests Public Assistance for 16 Counties

05/30/2015 12:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has requested that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant public assistance for 16 counties hit hard by tornadoes and flooding that began May 5. If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

Counties included in the request are: Atoka, Bryan, Cleveland, Cotton, Grady, Haskell, Hughes, Johnston, Latimer, McClain, Okfuskee, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Seminole, Stephens, and Tillman.

“In counties across Oklahoma, flooding is doing a large amount of damage to roads and bridges, in some cases rendering them impassable,” said Fallin. “I’m asking the federal government to approve this request as quickly as possible so both state and federal aid can be used to support local recovery efforts.”

Gov. Fallin Signs Legislation Reaffirming Corporation Commission as Regulator of Oil, Gas Industry

05/30/2015 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin on Friday signed a bill reaffirming the Corporation Commission as the sole regulator of Oklahoma’s oil and natural gas industry. The bill aims to preserve a unified regulatory framework for the industry and prevent a confusing patchwork of inconsistent municipal regulations across the state.

Fallin said today that Oklahoma has led the nation in developing rigorous standards for oil and gas production. A patchwork of regulations that vary across the state would be inconsistent with the goal of reasonable, easily understood regulations and could damage the state’s economy and environment, she said.

Senate Bill 809 reaffirms that the Oklahoma Corporation Commission is the primary entity charged with establishing a unified regulatory framework for the energy industry, emphasizing environmentally responsible policies. SB 809 prohibits municipalities from issuing moratoriums or bans on

Gov. Fallin Signs Bill Funding OKPOP Museum

05/30/2015 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin on Friday signed legislation approving funding for the Oklahoma Museum of Popular Culture, to be located in Tulsa, commonly known as OKPOP. Senate Bill 839 provides a \$25 million bond for

construction of the museum. Once built, no state appropriations will be required to fund operations.

Land for the facility has been donated, and an estimated \$10 million in exhibits and collections will also be donated, rather than purchased. The Oklahoma Historical Society has secured prominent collections from figures such as Garth Brooks, Will Rogers and Bob Wills, among numerous others.

“The OKPOP Museum will be a tourism destination and a source of economic growth and development for the city of Tulsa,” said Fallin. “It’s another addition to a beautiful city that continues to grow every day.”

SB 839 was authored by House Speaker Jeffrey Hickman and

Statement from Gov. Fallin on Final Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rule

05/28/2015 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) release of their final rules defining what constitute "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act.

"Two things are immediately clear about the EPA's new WOTUS rules. First, they represent the expansion of federal power over the nation's waters at the expense of property owners and states. Second, the EPA released these without regard to state or local interests, and oftentimes in direct opposition to the will of states that expressed concern and alarm over the nature of these rules.

"I continue to believe these rules will have a negative impact on economic development, and will slow down improvements and installation of critical infrastructure. Because of the flawed development of these rules and lack of a

Gov. Fallin Announces Job, Resource Fairs Scheduled in Enid, Tulsa

05/28/2015 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Oklahoma Job and Resource Fairs will be held next month in Enid and in Tulsa.

Job and resource fairs are scheduled for June 3 in Enid at Autry Tech and June 9 in Tulsa at Tulsa Tech's Lemley campus. Both events are from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The events are part of a series of job and resource fairs being held across the state as part of Governor Fallin's "Oklahoma Works initiative." The initiative seeks to support private and public efforts to give Oklahomans the work skills and education they need to find good-paying, fulfilling careers. It's also to ensure that Oklahoma businesses have the access they need to the educated and skilled workforce that today's modern economy demands.

The job fairs are also designed to help those who may have been directly affected by the recent loss of some Oklahoma energy sector jobs as well as those who have been displaced

Gov. Fallin Directs ODOT to Increase Support for County Infrastructure Repair Efforts

05/27/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- In light of widespread damage to roads and bridges caused by recent flooding, Governor Mary Fallin has instructed the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to expedite bidding on county infrastructure projects and to explore additional means of supporting recovery efforts. Fallin also said that the extent of the recovery effort would not be known until flooding recedes.

“Right now, we don’t know the full extent of county-level needs because we don’t know the full extent of the flood damage,” said Fallin. “We won’t know that until the water levels recede.

“We do know, however, that there will be infrastructure needs on the local level and that the state needs to play an active role in helping the counties any way we can. I’ve asked ODOT to do everything in their power to support local road and bridge repairs, including expediting the process by which they award

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Federal Assistance Granted for Three Oklahoma Counties Devastated by Storms, Floods

05/26/2015 03:15 PM CDT

All 77 Counties Now Under a State of Emergency

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin announced today that FEMA has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for three Oklahoma counties hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds.

The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners affected by severe storms that have occurred since May 5 in **Cleveland, Grady and Oklahoma** counties. The designation makes available federal assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs.

To apply for disaster assistance, individuals and business owners in these three counties may call **1-800-621-FEMA**

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Upcoming Memorial Day Holiday

05/25/2015 01:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the Memorial Day Holiday.

“This Memorial Day, please join me in praying for the many Americans who have lost their lives while serving their country. It is their sacrifices – as well as the sacrifices made by all of our veterans, active duty military personnel and their families – that allow us to be a nation of freedom and prosperity.”

Gov. Fallin Signs Bills to Responsibly Reform Wind Industry Incentives

05/20/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today signed two measures aimed at reforming tax incentives and credits currently available to the Oklahoma wind energy industry.

Senate Bill 498 phases out the current property tax exemption for wind facilities. SB 502 makes wind facilities ineligible for a job creation tax credit currently offered by the state. A zero emissions tax credit currently available to the wind industry will remain in place.

The governor said phasing out some – but not all – wind energy tax credits will reduce the fiscal burden on the state while still ensuring that Oklahoma’s wind energy industry continues to grow and thrive.

The Wind Coalition, a group of wind developers with a presence in Oklahoma, worked closely with legislators and the governor's office to craft the final agreement.

“When these tax credits were originally conceived, they were meant to support a new and

Governor Mary Fallin, Legislative Leaders Reach Budget Deal

05/19/2015 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin, Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman and House Speaker Jeffrey W. Hickman today announced an appropriated state budget agreement for Fiscal Year 2016.

Under the agreement, the FY 2016 appropriated budget will be \$7,138,920,521, which is \$74.3 million, or 1.03 percent, less than FY 2015's appropriated budget.

The agreement preserves current funding levels for common education, a major victory considering the state had \$611 million less in certified revenue available this legislative session than was appropriated in FY 2015. Education continues to be the state's largest investment, with more than 50 percent of all appropriated dollars going toward education expenses.

Other agencies protected from appropriation reductions through flat or increased appropriations include the Department of Corrections, Department of Public Safety, Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Oklahoma Department of

Gov. Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Cleveland, Grady and Oklahoma Counties

05/19/2015 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration for Cleveland, Grady and Oklahoma counties as a result of tornadoes, severe storms and straight-line winds that have occurred since May 5 as well as continued flooding. The designation would provide federal assistance to individuals and businesses in the storm-stricken areas.

In [a letter to the president](#), Fallin wrote that Oklahoma's latest round of record-breaking severe storms began May 5. Since then, the state has experienced widespread flash flooding, damaging winds, baseball-size hail and at least 25 tornadoes. Three Oklahomans lost their lives because of the storms. In addition, 828 homes and businesses were damaged in the storms. Of those, 157 were destroyed and 237 sustained major damage.

The threat of still more storms, tornadoes and flash flooding continues

The Oklahoman: State agencies, energy companies taking reasonable approach to Oklahoma quakes

Drilling moratorium isn't the answer

By [The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#) Published: May 14, 2015

NOTHING short of a drilling moratorium will satisfy those Oklahomans who are alarmed enough about increased earthquake activity that they went to the Capitol this week urging Gov. Mary Fallin to act. Given that some have seen homes and property damaged by quakes, their position is understandable.

Yet the notion that nothing is being done, or that state officials don't care and are turning a blind eye to this issue, is simply not true. Suggestions that this is so only serve to hurt the cause of those seeking change.

Nor is it true that Fallin can impose a moratorium on injection wells in the 16 counties that have seen the most earthquake activity, as the group "Coalition to Stop Induced Seismicity" wants.

The group brought petitions

[Gov. Fallin Names Bob Gilliland Chairman of Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission](#)

05/14/2015 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has named Bob Gilliland chairman of the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission and has tabbed the outgoing chairman to serve as a special commissioner.

Gilliland, of Oklahoma City, was appointed in 2013 as one of three initial members on the Workers' Compensation Commission. He assumes his chairmanship duties June 1.

"Bob has helped craft a fair and efficient way to deal with injured workers on the job," said Fallin. "His knowledge and experience will be very helpful in heading up the commission."

Troy L. Wilson, the first chairman of the commission, announced his resignation last month and that his last day would be May 31. He will serve as special commissioner from June 1 through Aug. 31, 2015.

As special commissioner, Wilson will now hear cases when a member of the commission is disqualified because of a conflict. Fallin has

[Gov. Fallin Signs Law to Streamline Transfer of Prisoners from County to State Custody](#)

05/12/2015 06:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a measure designed to streamline the process of transferring prisoners from county jails to Department of Corrections (DOC) custody.

When a person is sentenced to prison, they are held temporarily in county jail before being transferred into DOC custody to begin their prison sentence. DOC relies on county sheriffs or court clerks to alert the agency that a prisoner is ready for transfer. The agency is not aware that an offender is awaiting transfer until the county delivers the sentencing documents. However, there are no requirements for counties to deliver sentencing documents within a specific time frame.

The lag in communication can prevent DOC from accurately budgeting for offenders and makes the agency unable to provide accurate population and capacity numbers.

Furthermore, DOC is required to pay county jails a per diem fee from the day of an inmate's

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill That Extends Abortion Waiting Time

05/06/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation that extends the waiting period for women getting an abortion to 72 hours.

House Bill 1409 increases the time for voluntary and informed consent before an abortion from 24 to 72 hours. Additionally, abortion facilities that operate a website must add a web link to the state's website, "[A Woman's Right to Know](#)."

"This legislation will help women get the information they need before making a decision they can't take back," said Fallin. "It will allow for more time to consider medical risks as well as explore alternatives to abortion, such as adoption."

HB 1409 was authored by Rep. Lisa Billy and sponsored by Sen. Greg Treat. HB 1409 takes effect Nov. 1.

When the measure takes effect, Oklahoma will become the fourth state with a 72-hour waiting period.

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill to Ban Tobacco from School Campuses

05/06/2015 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 1685, requiring all Oklahoma schools to be tobacco-free. The bill is known as the "24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act".

Tobacco use of any kind will not be allowed on school grounds and the use of a tobacco product will also be prohibited in school vehicles, and at any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event or activity.

Many Oklahoma schools have banned tobacco products voluntarily, but HB1965 will make sure that all children will be protected. Prohibiting tobacco use at all times on school grounds protects them from exposure and reinforces for them that most people do not use tobacco products.

“This is a common-sense measure that will reduce tobacco’s influence on our children,” said Fallin. “It is encouraging that 83 percent of Oklahoma’s students already attend schools where tobacco is banned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This bill

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Texting While Driving Ban

05/05/2015 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 1965, making it illegal to text and drive in Oklahoma. HB 1965 makes texting while driving a primary offense, meaning law officers will be able to pull over anyone who is texting while operating a vehicle. The penalty will be \$100.

The governor, during her State of the State address earlier this year, called on lawmakers to pass a texting while driving ban.

“Over a dozen Oklahomans die every year in accidents caused by drivers who are distracted by cell phones,” said Fallin. “Hundreds more are injured. Studies show that driving while texting can actually be more dangerous than driving drunk.”

Fallin said she hopes the law will save lives by changing driver behavior and attitudes regarding texting while driving.

“My hope is that this bill does more than just change the law,” Fallin said. “As a state, we need to change the

Gov. Fallin Signs Law to Seek Improvements in SoonerCare Services for Aged, Blind and Disabled

05/04/2015 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 1566, a bill aiming to reduce costs while improving health services provided by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA).

HB 1566 directs the OHCA to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for care coordination models for the aged, blind and disabled (ABD) Oklahomans who are enrolled in the state’s SoonerCare (Oklahoma Medicaid) program. According to the agency’s Annual Report, the ABDs comprised 16.4 percent of the total SoonerCare

enrollment in 2014. The group accounted for 46.6 percent of SoonerCare expenditures.

The first step in this process will be for the OHCA to seek information from advocacy groups, providers, insurers, members and all other interested parties to define the parameters for the RFP. OHCA leadership expects this information gathering phase of the process to take several months and anticipates the RFP to be released in early 2016.

“This

Gov. Fallin Signs Key Sentencing Reform Bill

05/04/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed a bill that will allow judges to impose shorter sentences for some nonviolent crimes.

House Bill 1518 allows judges to depart from mandatory minimum terms if they believe the minimum sentence is “not necessary for the protection of the public” and could “result in substantial injustice to the defendant.” Freed from having to impose a mandatory sentence, a judge in some cases could choose to divert the offender to a program to deal with underlying mental health or drug abuse issues. Judges who depart from minimum mandatory sentencing are to file a report with the district court clerk’s office. Court clerks, in turn, will file an annual report with the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, which will post the information on its website.

The measure, called the Justice Safety Valve Act, is an attempt to divert more nonviolent offenders into alternative programs and away from

Investing in Oklahoma through STEM

05/04/2015 02:45 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

Science isn’t just something that happens in labs. It touches every industry in our state and it impacts every Oklahoman. Science, technology, engineering and math (or “STEM”) lead to innovative breakthroughs that improve our quality of life, promote a better-educated workforce, create higher-paying jobs and help Oklahoma retain our most valuable asset – our people.

For that reason, it is important that we keep up with the demand for STEM-educated Oklahomans.

Being STEM-educated requires pursuing education beyond high school: either a traditional four-year college degree, an associate’s degree, or a career tech certificate. Unfortunately, only about half of our population receives any formal education after

high school. That means we have a long way to go to fill the state's pipeline for STEM-related jobs. That is especially true given that Oklahoma is expected to have

Governor Mary Fallin Vetoes SB 676, Citing Redundancy and Costs to Taxpayers

05/01/2015 03:00 PM CDT

Executive Order Has Already Codified State's Opposition to New EPA Carbon Mandates

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today vetoed SB 676, a bill that requires the state of Oklahoma to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rules regarding carbon emissions. To read the veto message, [click here](#).

Fallin said the bill – which has been described as an attempt to fight overbearing EPA regulations – inadvertently does the opposite, at great expense to the state.

SB 676 is designed as a counter to proposed EPA regulations that mandate a 30 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from power plants in each state. The EPA has asked each state to develop a SIP – a state-based plan for compliance.

Governor Mary Fallin,

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Law Protecting Religious Liberty

05/01/2015 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed HB 1007, a bill protecting religious leaders from being compelled to perform marriages that are in direct contradiction to their religious beliefs. The bill states, “No regularly licensed, ordained or authorized official of any religious organization shall be required to solemnize or recognize any marriage that violates the official's conscience or religious beliefs.”

Fallin said the bill was an important measure protecting the Constitutional and religious rights of Oklahomans.

“This bill makes it clear that the government can never compel our religious leaders or houses of worship to act in violation of their faith where marriage is concerned,” said Fallin. “I am proud to join our Legislature in taking a strong stand in defense of religious liberty and the freedoms awarded to all American citizens by the U.S. Constitution.”

Gov. Mary Fallin Signs Bill Allowing Medical Trials of Non-Intoxicating CBD Oil for Sick Children

04/30/2015 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 2154, authorizing a medical pilot program allowing the medically supervised use of cannabidiol (CBD), a low THC non-intoxicating derivative of marijuana. Reports from some families indicate that CBD may be used to effectively treat children who suffer from epileptic seizures and help reduce the number and intensity of those seizures.

HB 2154 was authored by Rep. Jon Echols and Sen. Brian Crain. The bill is known as “Katie and Cayman’s Law,” named after a young relative of Echols and a family-friend of Crain, both of whom suffer from seizures.

“This bill will help get sick children potentially life-changing medicine,” said Fallin. “By crafting the legislation in a way that allows for tightly controlled medical studies, we can ensure we are researching possible treatments in a responsible and scientific way.”

Fallin reiterated she

Gov. Fallin Names Four to Serve on Oklahoma Water Resources Board

04/29/2015 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today named Stephen Allen, of Jenks, to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. She also reappointed board members Bob Drake, of Davis, Rudy Herrmann, of Afton, and Ford Drummond, of Bartlesville.

Allen and Drake will serve terms that expire May 14, 2021. Drummond’s term will expire May 14, 2020 and Herrmann’s term will expire May 14, 2022. All require confirmation by the state Senate.

Allen, vice president and associate general counsel for ONEOK, Inc., will serve as an oil and gas production representative on the board. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma Baptist University and a doctorate law degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law.

Allen also serves on the Metro Christian Academy Board of Trustees and is an advisory trustee on the Oklahoma Baptist University Board of Trustees. He and his wife, Rachel, have two children.

Herrmann represents recreational water use

Governor Mary Fallin Issues Order Standing up to EPA Overreach

04/28/2015 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an [executive order](#) stating that Oklahoma will not file a State Implementation Plan (SIP) with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulating carbon dioxide emissions

produced by Oklahoma power plants. The order also requests Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt “take such action as is necessary to enforce the rights of the State of Oklahoma and its citizens from such federal actions as may impact the freedoms of its people.”

In 2013, President Obama directed the EPA to issue sweeping and unprecedented regulations regarding carbon emissions, citing the federal Clean Air Act section 111(d) as his legal authority. The authority of the EPA to issue such rules has been called into question by attorneys general in a number of states, including Oklahoma.

The EPA’s proposed rules would require states to

Gov. Fallin Signs Legislation Empowering Workforce Council

04/27/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation streamlining the composition of the Governor’s Council on Workforce and Economic Development. Senate Bill 612 changes the membership to give representatives of the private sector and business community a majority on the council, which will still receive input from state agencies.

The Council on Workforce and Economic Development is one of the main state bodies working to implement [Oklahoma Works](#), Fallin’s initiative to help boost educational attainment in Oklahoma. Fallin discussed Oklahoma Works at length in her State of the State address this year, laying out her plan to develop and support partnerships between local businesses, career tech, higher education and K-12 schools. The initiative focuses on regional key economic networks that will collaborate to find solutions to local problems and obstacles. Solutions include local

Gov. Fallin Signs Tax Incentive Evaluation Bills, Dedicates Legislation to Late Rep. David Dank

04/27/2015 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation that will require all business tax incentives to be objectively evaluated at least once every four years and require future incentives to include measurable goals.

Fallin dedicated Senate Bill 806 and House Bill 2182, which she proposed in her State of the State message earlier this year, to Rep. David Dank, who died earlier this month. Dank was a longtime advocate for tax credit reform in the Legislature.

“These are the tools Oklahoma has needed to sort out effective incentives from ineffective ones so our state can continue to support economic growth in a fiscally responsible manner,” said Fallin.

Tax credits, rebates and other economic incentives total hundreds of millions of dollars annually, but the state has no formal evaluation mechanism to determine their effectiveness.

“We need to ensure the money we are investing in economic incentives and

Gov. Fallin Signs Bill Expanding Charter School Option across the State

04/24/2015 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation giving school districts throughout the state the ability to expand public education options and create charter schools. Senate Bill 782 amends the current law, which allowed the creation of charter schools only in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties.

“This legislation provides more local control for parents and school administrators,” said Fallin. “Increasing education options will give students greater opportunities to succeed in the classroom and allow students to graduate with skill-sets necessary to go to college or into a career.”

SB 782 will give parents and school boards greater opportunity to address the educational needs of young people. Charter schools give parents more choices for their children and encourage innovation.

SB 782 was authored by Sen. Clark Jolley and House Speaker Pro Tem Lee Denney. It will take effect 90 days after the Legislature

Gov. Fallin Signs Performance-Informed Budgeting Reform Measure

04/24/2015 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed a bill that requires state agencies to use performance-informed budgeting techniques, which was one of her key legislative priorities.

Senate Bill 189 changes the budgeting process to align resources with state priorities and measurable outcomes. Lawmakers appropriated money in 2012 to purchase software to develop the new process.

“Performance-informed budgeting moves Oklahoma from funding programs we think might work to funding programs we know do work,” said Fallin. “This bill will help to ensure that government is allocating taxpayer resources wisely and delivering tangible, measurable results.”

The governor identified implementing a performance-informed budgeting system as a priority during her State of the State address to lawmakers earlier this year.

Fallin and her Cabinet have worked with the Office of Management and Enterprise Services the last

Governor Mary Fallin Names CompSource Board Member

04/23/2015 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Dan Ramsey to the board of directors of CompSource Mutual Insurance Company, the insurance company for the state’s workers’ compensation system. He will succeed James Case, whose term expires in June.

Ramsey will serve a seven-year term beginning in July. Confirmation from the state Senate is not required.

Ramsey currently serves as an agency mentor for the Oklahoma Agents Alliance, a master agency of the Strategic Insurance Agency Alliance that works in partnership with independent insurance agencies in Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas.

“Dan Ramsey brings decades of experience with him to the board,” said Fallin. “His work will help to continue to provide a financially stable market for Oklahoma businesses while ensuring injured employees are fairly compensated and receive the treatment they need to get healthy and return to work.”

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Launch of Earthquakes.ok.gov

04/21/2015 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the launch of earthquakes.ok.gov, a public resource dedicated to sharing research, regulations, updates and news items related to Oklahoma’s recent earthquakes.

The website is a result of the work of the Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity. In September 2014, Governor Fallin directed Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment Michael J. Teague to lead the Coordinating Council to organize state resources and activities related to Oklahoma’s recent increase in seismic activity. The body’s primary responsibility is to work cooperatively to develop solutions, identify gaps in resources and coordinate efforts among state agencies, researchers and the state’s oil and gas industry.

“This website will help provide Oklahomans with up-to-date and timely information about our ongoing earthquake response,”

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill Clarifying State Labor Department’s Role in Asbestos Cleanup

04/20/2015 04:15 PM CDT

Department of Environmental Quality, Labor Department sign cooperative agreement clearing up jurisdictional issues.

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation that will reduce the regulatory burden faced by developers and contractors concerning asbestos material. Senate Bill 658 eliminates outdated language related to asbestos abatement in private and public facilities and clarifies that the Department of Labor (DOL) is the primary authority for asbestos abatement on the job site. In addition to

the legislation signed today, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Labor signed a cooperative agreement to clarify jurisdictional authorities related to all phases of the cleanup of asbestos material. Read the agreement [here](#).

“Throughout Oklahoma, communities have

Governor Mary Fallin Names Bob Ross to State Board of Education

04/17/2015 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Robert J. “Bob” Ross to the Oklahoma Board of Education. Ross will replace Bill Shdeed, who resigned, and will serve as an at-large member. His appointment requires confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Since 2003, Bob Ross has been with Inasmuch Foundation and Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation (EEJF). He became president and CEO of both in 2005. Inasmuch Foundation is a philanthropic organization that invests in education, health and human services and community enhancement in Oklahoma. EEJF provides grants and contributions to media institutions and journalism schools nationwide, primarily in the areas of investigative reporting, youth education, professional development and special opportunities.

“Bob Ross is a visionary Oklahoma leader whose philanthropic work has helped to support schools and learning programs across the state,”

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill Expanding Execution Alternatives

04/17/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 1879, a measure allowing the state to perform executions through nitrogen hypoxia if the current method of execution – lethal injection – is ruled unconstitutional or becomes unavailable. The United States Supreme Court is currently reviewing Oklahoma’s lethal injection protocols.

Under current Oklahoma law, if lethal injection is ruled unconstitutional or otherwise becomes unavailable, the state can revert to the electric chair as a second alternative and firing squad as the third alternative for capital punishment. HB 1879 makes nitrogen hypoxia the second alternative, electric chair the third and firing squad the final alternative.

Nitrogen hypoxia causes a quick loss of consciousness and then death from lack of oxygen.

After signing the bill, Fallin reiterated her support of the death penalty for especially brutal murders.

“Oklahoma executes

Honoring the Oklahoma Standard

04/08/2015 10:15 AM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

Twenty years ago, on April 19th, I was serving as Oklahoma’s lieutenant governor.

That morning, I was in downtown Oklahoma City with over 1,000 attendees at the Metro Prayer Breakfast. We prayed, read Scripture and heard from speakers who gave testimony to the incredible things God had done in their lives. Little did we know how heavily we would need to lean on our faith and the strength of God to get us through what was about to happen.

At 9:02 that morning, Timothy McVeigh detonated a truck bomb that destroyed the Murrah Federal Building. It was a horrific act of evil and terrorism that took the lives of 168 men, women and children and shook our state to the core.

The sense of loss that day was indescribable. What can you say to someone who has just lost their mother, their father or a spouse? What do you tell a parent who has just lost a child because a *daycare*

SBA Disaster Assistance Granted for Oklahoma Counties Hit by Recent Storms

04/07/2015 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Following a request from Governor Mary Fallin, the U.S. Small Business Administration today announced that low-interest federal disaster loans are available to businesses and residents in Tulsa and Cleveland counties who were affected by the tornadoes, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding that occurred March 25-26. The [disaster declaration](#) also makes SBA assistance available in the contiguous counties of Canadian, Creek, Grady, McClain, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Rogers, Wagoner and Washington.

“This most recent storm was devastating to many families and businesses,” said Fallin. “I’m glad the SBA recognized the need to step-up and help the recovery effort. This disaster assistance will provide some much-needed help to families and businesses that are working to rebuild and recover.”

Last

After White House Denies Disaster Assistance, Gov. Fallin Ask for SBA Disaster Declaration

04/06/2015 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced [the White House has denied the state's request](#) for assistance to aid individuals and businesses in Tulsa and Cleveland counties that were hit hard by last month's deadly tornadoes. The governor said she is disappointed in the decision, but the state is continuing to work to bring assistance to those affected by the storm. She announced today that the state has now requested a disaster declaration for Tulsa and Cleveland counties through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

"Having toured the damage near Sand Springs and Moore, I know firsthand how devastating last month's tornadoes were to these communities," said Fallin.

"While I am disappointed by the White House's decision to deny individual assistance, it is my hope the community can still receive help from

Gov. Fallin Names Jari Askins Special Adviser on Child Welfare and Pinnacle Plan Implementation

04/02/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today named former Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins as special adviser to the governor on child welfare and Pinnacle Plan implementation.

Askins will primarily be responsible for overseeing implementation of the Pinnacle Plan, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services' (DHS) ongoing effort to reform the state's child welfare operations.

"I've named Jari to this new, top-level role to bolster the effort to improve child welfare services and add her expertise to a priority issue," said Fallin. "Jari is a universally respected leader who has made child welfare one of her top priorities throughout her long career in public service. There is no one more qualified to ensure that we are placing Oklahoma children in safe and loving environments."

Askins, who has served in all three branches of government, most recently served as interim executive director of the Oklahoma

Governor Fallin Accepts Resignation of Okla. Workers' Comp Commission Chair, Names Two New Members

04/01/2015 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today accepted the resignation of Troy Wilson, Sr., the first chairman of the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission. His resignation takes effect May 31. To read Wilson's resignation letter, [click here](#).

The governor named Dr. LeRoy Young, of Oklahoma City, to replace Wilson on the commission beginning on June 1. Fallin also named Mark Liotta, a former state

representative from Tulsa, to succeed Workers' Compensation Commissioner Denise Engle, whose term expires in August.

Both appointments must be approved by the Senate, which is in session through May. The governor acted today to ensure time for their confirmation process. Robert H. Gilliland remains on the three-member commission; his term doesn't expire until 2017.

"When I named Troy as chairman of the Workers'

Governor Mary Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Tulsa and Cleveland Counties

04/01/2015 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration for Tulsa and Cleveland counties in the wake of deadly tornadoes that ripped through two mobile home parks near Sand Springs and another tornado that swept through Moore and heavily damaged an elementary school. The designation would provide federal assistance to individuals and businesses in the tornado-ravaged areas.

Preliminary damage assessments showed 1,047 homes and businesses were damaged in the tornadoes, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding that occurred March 25 in Cleveland and Tulsa counties. Four fatalities are attributed to the storms, according to the Oklahoma State Medical Examiner's Office, and 26 people suffered injuries requiring treatment at area hospitals, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

"Sadly, last week's deadly tornadoes cut four lives short," said Fallin. "They also destroyed or

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill Aimed at Reducing Prescription Drug Abuse

03/31/2015 04:00 PM CDT

Rx Drug Bill First Bill to be Signed in 2015 Legislative Session

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed legislation taking aim at Oklahoma's prescription drug abuse problem, the first bill to be signed into law in 2015. House Bill 1948 seeks to reduce "doctor shopping," the practice of going to multiple physicians with requests for prescription narcotics, and to reduce the reliance on and inappropriate use of dangerous narcotics to treat pain. The law requires doctors to check a Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) database before writing prescriptions for potentially dangerous and addictive drugs like oxycodone. By checking the database, doctors can reduce the likelihood that patients are seeking the same prescription drugs from more than one physician at a time.

“Sadly, prescription drug abuse in Oklahoma is nothing short of an epidemic,” said Fallin. “There are more fatal

Governor Mary Fallin and Legislative Leaders Thank Education Supporters

03/30/2015 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin and legislative leaders today thanked thousands of teachers, superintendents and education activists for coming to the Oklahoma Capitol, where they rallied in support of public education.

“Our educators have one of the most difficult and important jobs out there,” said Fallin. “I appreciate their service to the state and their commitment to our children. It’s great to see so many of them out here today getting involved in education policy.”

Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman also praised the education community.

“We are very fortunate to have so many talented teachers and administrators,” said Bingman. “Our educators have a tremendous impact on the lives of Oklahomans, and we are all better for their efforts. I am grateful to our teachers for all they do to give young Oklahomans the tools they need to succeed in every facet of their

Gov. Fallin Forms Inter-Agency Panel to Continue to Look at Ways to Improve Services

03/27/2015 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel for Developmental Disabilities today issued its final report - offering a series of recommendations for improvements in services to people with disabilities - before disbanding. Saying much important work remains to be done, Governor Mary Fallin signed an [executive order](#) creating two new bodies: first, the members of the former Blue Ribbon panel will continue to serve on a new advisory committee and offer policy proposals; second, the governor established an inter-agency Executive Council, composed of state officials and members of Fallin's Cabinet, who will seek to implement those proposals.

"The Blue Ribbon Panel was about generating good ideas and offering best practices," said Fallin. "Now we need to move beyond that into the realm of making good policy. Keeping the Blue Ribbon Panel members on in an advisory role and

Governor Mary Fallin Declares State of Emergency

03/26/2015 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for 25 counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding on Wednesday. To read the executive order, [click here](#).

The counties included in the governor's declaration are: Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Garvin, Grady, Lincoln, Logan, Love, McClain, Murray, Oklahoma, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Pontotoc, Rogers, Seminole, Stephens, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington and Washita.

"Last night's storms led to wide-spread damage throughout a large portion of the state," said Fallin. "I appreciate the ongoing work of our first responders who have been working through the night to assist those in need. I also offer my continued thoughts and prayers to all those affected by the storms."

The storms resulted in at least one

Gov. Fallin to Host First in a Series of Job, Resource Fairs Planned Across Oklahoma

03/16/2015 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin, along with state agencies and local organizations, will host the initial Oklahoma Job and Resource Fair, which will connect job seekers with employment opportunities and resources. The job fair is meant, in part, to assist with the economic effects of the downturn in the state's energy sector.

The event is scheduled from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. March 26 at the Western Technology Center, 301 Western Drive, in Elk City.

The governor has directed Secretary of Education and Workforce Natalie Shirley and Secretary of Commerce and Tourism Deby Snodgrass and their staffs to work with the energy sector and non-profit organizations to help displaced workers transition to new job and career opportunities while also meeting the immediate needs of families.

"I know this is a stressful time for laid-off workers and their families," said Fallin. "State agencies are trying to streamline the

In Advance of St. Patrick's Day Weekend, Gov. Fallin Announces DUI Crackdown, Extends Council

03/13/2015 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today wished Oklahomans a happy and safe St. Patrick's Day, warning people not to drink and drive. The governor announced that the Department of Public Safety will be conducting ramped up enforcement efforts this weekend in an effort to crack down on impaired

driving. She also signed an [executive order](#) renewing an advisory council tasked with looking at ways to reduce impaired driving.

Last year during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period, 77 people were seriously injured and four people died as a result of alcohol- or drug-impaired driving.

"I want to remind our motorists that if you drink and drive - or if you use drugs and drive - you will get caught," said Fallin. "If you plan to drink, be sure to have someone in your group who doesn't drink so that he or she can be a designated driver. Let's

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Order to Extend Council on Physical Fitness

03/12/2015 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an [executive order](#) extending a gubernatorial council promoting good health, saying that in addition to supporting physical activity the panel should emphasize the importance of a well-balanced diet.

Noting that Oklahoma ranks seventh-worst for obesity, the governor said the Governor's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition (previously the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports) should explain the important role physical fitness and nutrition play in the health of Oklahomans.

Latest figures show 32.2 percent of Oklahomans are obese. The governor said she would like to reduce that to 29.7 percent by 2017. The Governor's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition could be a tremendous help in attaining that goal.

"Encouraging participation in athletics is a great way to promote a

Gov. Fallin Names Robert Hudson to Court of Criminal Appeals

03/11/2015 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Judge Robert Hudson to the Court of Criminal Appeals. Hudson, of Guthrie, succeeds Judge Charles Johnson.

Hudson, a former longtime prosecutor for Payne and Logan counties, has served as a special district judge in Payne and Logan Counties since 2012. In that role, he handles both civil and criminal litigation.

"Judge Robert Hudson is a proven and effective leader who has served in both public and private practice," Fallin said. "As a prosecutor, he has been both 'tough on crime' and 'smart on crime.' Judge Hudson has worked to ensure that dangerous criminals are locked up, while at the same time supporting programs that provide an alternative punishment for non-violent offenders, many of whom have substance

abuse or mental health issues that require treatment. I look forward to working with him in his new role.”

Governor Fallin, Secretary Cline Unveil Healthy Oklahoma 2020: Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan

03/10/2015 04:00 PM CDT

Calling on communities to take on the challenge of improving the health of their citizens, Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Terry Cline presented *Healthy Oklahoma 2020: Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan* (OHIP) during an event at the Noble High School Sports Complex. The plan outlines strategies and sets goals to make Oklahomans healthier. [Click here](#) for a copy of the plan.

“In Oklahoma there are thousands of unnecessary deaths and billions of dollars spent annually to treat preventable illnesses,” said Fallin. “We are too good of a state to be this unhealthy. With the goals and strategies laid out in the Oklahoma 20/20 Health Improvement Plan, we will continue to chart a course forward and improve health outcomes for all Oklahomans.”

Healthy Oklahoma 2020 updates Oklahoma’s existing health improvement plan, which was

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Governor Mary Fallin Statement on SAE Incident at OU

03/09/2015 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding a video showing several members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity at the University of Oklahoma using racial slurs.

“The racist words chanted by the students in this video do not represent OU values or Oklahoma values. As the outrage among Oklahomans has demonstrated, we are a state that does not tolerate that kind of disrespectful behavior. I appreciate President Boren as well as OU’s faculty, staff and students for quickly condemning these hurtful words and demonstrating the true nature of our Oklahoma community, which is diverse, compassionate and respectful.” – Gov. Mary Fallin

[The Washington Times: Gov. Mary Fallin: The Fallout of the Latest Obamacare Case on the States](#)

03/06/2015 10:15 AM CST

By Gov. Mary Fallin - - Thursday, March 5, 2015

The King v. Burwell case before the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) could present both challenges and [opportunities](#) for our states. The [Court](#) will decide later this year whether the [Internal Revenue Service](#) had the statutory authority to write a rule allowing health insurance subsidies to flow through federally-facilitated exchanges.

Petitioners argue that the law clearly restricts the subsidies to “an Exchange established by the State” under section 1311 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and that administrative agencies like the

[Three Drought Grants Approved for Okla Communities Will Save Nearly 17M Gallons of Water Annually](#)

03/03/2015 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) today announced the approval of \$1,047,700 in grants to three rural Oklahoma communities for water system improvement projects that will save approximately 16.7 million gallons of water per year once completed.

The three grants were made available to Boise City, Fort Supply and Shattuck through the state's Water for 2060 Drought Grant program, announced by the governor in 2014, to municipalities, counties, water/sewer districts and other public entities to help fund projects that highlight responsible use of water.

“As we enter a fifth year of drought, it’s more important than ever to help communities, agricultural producers and industries develop strategies to endure the water supply issues we currently face, as well as to prepare for the inevitable droughts of the future,” said Fallin. “Responsible use of water remains the most

[The FY 2016 Budget: A Challenge, and an Opportunity](#)

03/02/2015 03:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

With every challenge comes an opportunity and, as one of my favorite sayings goes, “setbacks are opportunities for comebacks.” Fifty dollar a barrel oil prices and a \$611 million budget shortfall certainly qualify as challenges, even setbacks, but they are ones that we can overcome. This year we have a tremendous opportunity to carefully rethink how we put together the state’s budget and to address cyclical and structural imbalances that threaten the stability of state finances.

It is important to keep this shortfall in context. This is not the first or the largest budget shortfall the state of Oklahoma has had in recent memory. In 2010, during the national recession, we had a billion dollar shortfall. The sky did not fall.

In 2011, when I took office, I inherited a \$500 million shortfall. At the time, we had very few tools

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointment to the Regional University System of Oklahoma

02/27/2015 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Mark A. Stansberry, of Edmond, to the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) as a member of the Board of Regents. He succeeds Richard Ogden, who resigned. Stansberry will serve the remainder of Ogden’s term, which expires in June 2019. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Stansberry previously served on the board of the RUSO from 2001 to 2010; from 2006 to 2007 he served as chairman. He was appointed by then-Governor Frank Keating.

Stansberry is founder and chairman of The GTD Group, a company that works to help American businesses expand into international markets by providing services related to international trade and investment, technology management, research and development, government relations, educational consulting, energy consulting and environmental consulting.

He currently serves on the board of trustees at Oklahoma

State Charitable Campaign Surpasses Goal

02/25/2015 09:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Secretary of State and Native American Affairs Chris Benge announced today the State Charitable Campaign (SCC) surpassed its 2014 donation goal by raising \$603,617 to benefit SCC member charities.

The SCC offers an efficient, accountable way for state employees to contribute to over 200 local, statewide and international charities.

The charities support a variety of services, including feeding the hungry, education for children in poverty, senior care and many others.

This year, state employees contributed \$47,303 more than the previous year, said Bengé, who served as the 2014 SCC chairman.

“I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication from state employees this year who have stepped up and donated some of their hard-earned money to a variety of worthy causes,” said Bengé. “The contributions will go a long way in helping these organizations sustain

[The Oklahoman: Editorial: In attacking Okla state budget hole, every little bit of savings helps](#)

02/23/2015 11:30 AM CST

By [The Oklahoman Editorial Board](#) Published: February 22, 2015

WHAT does reducing or eliminating state agency “swag” expenditures have to do with filling an Oklahoma budget hole that has grown to a whopping \$611.3 million?

Some might say not much. After all, the amount identified by state Finance Secretary Preston Doerflinger from fiscal year 2014 — \$28.5 million — wouldn’t do much to fill the hole that lawmakers face.

But to dismiss Doerflinger’s attack on swag is to endorse the status quo, and state government can’t afford to do that any longer.

The categories in the budget system that produce the \$28.5 million total include promotional expenses and “Exhibitions, Shows and Special Events.” These are ways that state agencies make their services known to wider audiences. Agencies need to advertise their services — the Department of

[Gov. Fallin Appoints C. Renzi Stone to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents](#)

02/19/2015 01:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of C. Renzi Stone of Oklahoma City to the University of Oklahoma (OU) Board of Regents. He will succeed Tom Clark and will serve a seven-year term, pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Stone is the founder, CEO and chairman of Saxum, an independent integrated marketing communications agency with offices in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Okla. and Houston, Texas. Stone is a Tulsa native.

At OU, he serves on the board of visitors for the Gaylord College of Journalism and

Mass Communication, College of International Studies and is on the Athletics Advisory Council.

“Renzi Stone is a committed public servant and an exceptional businessman who knows the importance of a quality education to be successful in today’s job market,” Fallin said. “His leadership skills and dedication to the University of Oklahoma make him an ideal

Okla. Tourism & Recreation Releases Historical Guide Detailing State’s African American History

02/19/2015 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department today announced the release of the cultural brochure “Long Road to Liberty: Oklahoma’s African American History and Culture.”

The 75-page historical guide is a brochure dedicated to Oklahoma’s rich African American history and influence that has played an important role in shaping the culture of Oklahoma since before statehood. Copies of the brochure are free and can be ordered online at <http://www.travelok.com/>.

The Tourism and Recreation Department partnered with the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Oklahoma History Center and the Tulsa Historical Society and Museum to produce the brochure.

“As we continue to celebrate Black History Month in the state of Oklahoma, this brochure offers a detailed journey into the struggle and triumph of Oklahoma’s African American heritage,” said Secretary of

Tulsa World Editorial: Gov. Fallin Brings New Level of Accountability to State Government

02/13/2015 12:00 PM CST

Gov. Mary Fallin has introduced a fascinating idea into state government — accountability.

In her State of the State address, Fallin rolled out okstatestat.ok.gov, an online set of measurable goals (complete with tracking indicators) for how she wants state government to improve the lives of Oklahomans.

.

It’s part of a broader effort, performance-informed budgeting. That means that in the future, lawmakers will be able to

Gov. Fallin Taps Public School, Career Tech & Higher Ed Leaders to Serve on Education Advisory Panel

02/13/2015 09:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the formation of the Governor’s Education Advisory Committee.

Committee members include representatives of K-12 schools, Career Technology centers, and colleges and universities. The committee will advise the governor on education policy and aid in the development and implementation of the governor’s “Oklahoma Works” initiative. The new initiative, announced in Fallin’s State of the State Address, seeks to develop local partnerships between the public and private sector to ensure students have access to the education and training they need to find good paying jobs after graduation. More information about the initiative can be found at <http://oklahomaworks.gov/>.

“Nothing is more important to Oklahoma’s future than boosting educational attainment and ensuring our students get the education they need to succeed in the

Gov. Fallin Names Secretary of State Chris Benge as Native American Liaison, Establishes Cabinet

02/09/2015 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Secretary of State Chris Benge as Native American liaison within the governor’s office.

The governor also issued an executive order establishing her Cabinet for her second four-year term. Benge, a member of the Cherokee Nation, will now serve as secretary of state and Native American affairs.

He succeeds Jacque Secondine Hensley, who had advised the governor on American Indian affairs since July 2012. Hensley has accepted a position with the Department of Human Services, where she will work on a variety of Native American issues.

“Jacque has done an outstanding job in facilitating good relations and communication between the tribes and the governor’s office,” said Fallin. “She will be missed, and I wish her all the best in her new endeavor.”

Fallin named Benge to serve as secretary of state in November 2013. He served as

Gov. Fallin Issues Hiring, Wage Adjustment Restrictions for State Agencies

02/09/2015 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – After calling for greater accountability in government spending in last week’s State of the State Address, Governor Mary Fallin has issued [an executive order](#) tightening personnel hiring and wage adjustment practices for all state agencies.

“As we address the developing budgetary challenges the state faces, it is incumbent upon all public officials to more carefully manage every taxpayer dollar. This order places greater restrictions and scrutiny on personnel spending while still allowing agencies to effectively manage their workforces to fulfill their missions,” Fallin said.

The governor signed an executive order that prohibits new hires, employee raises or bonuses unless an exception is approved by the statewide elected official who directs and manages the agency or the appropriate Cabinet secretary. The approval process requires a written,

Gov. Fallin Renews Executive Orders, Clears out Dozens of Others

02/06/2015 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an [executive order](#) that carries forward 24 executive orders from her and previous administrations and eliminates dozens of others.

The governor has decided not to renew nearly 70 executive orders, some of which date back 56 years. Many of the orders not being renewed deal with outdated policies and agencies or are inconsistent with federal law. Some of them include:

- A 1986 order dealing with the now defunct Oklahoma Pecan Commission.
- A 1997 order designating the now defunct Oklahoma Amateur Sports Commission to advise the governor on the promotion of amateur sports.

“I’m bringing forward just those executive orders that are pertinent to managing government,” said Fallin. “This is just another example of getting rid of the clutter that state government accumulates over the years and

Gov. Fallin Orders Flags to Be Flown at Half-Staff to Honor Fallen State Trooper

02/03/2015 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin [has ordered](#) all American and Oklahoma flags on state property to be flown at half-staff from 5 p.m. Friday, February 6, until 8 a.m. Monday, February 9, to honor Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Nicholas Dees, who died while on active duty.

The funeral for Trooper Dees is scheduled for noon Saturday at Broken Bow High School. The governor orders flags to be flown at half-staff on the days of funerals for state law officers and military members killed in the line of duty and for current and former state officials.

“Trooper Dees was very proud to be a member of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and he served the state well,” said Fallin. “He was known for his professionalism at work and his kindness towards family and friends. He will be sorely missed.”

Dees and Trooper Keith Burch were struck by a vehicle Saturday night

Governor Mary Fallin Delivers 2015 State of the State Address

02/02/2015 05:15 PM CST

Governor Asks Lawmakers to Fix Structural Problems in Budget, Support Key Priorities

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today delivered the annual State of the State Address in front of a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature. In it, Fallin focused on the urgent need to improve the state’s budgeting process to ensure that legislators can adequately fund priority goals related to education, public safety, health and more. A copy of her State of the State Address is attached to this email. The proposed Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 (FY 2016) can be found here: <http://www.ok.gov/OSF/documents/bud16.pdf>

Fixing Oklahoma’s Unsustainable Budget Trends

Governor Fallin showed legislators two graphs during the State of the State: the first chart tracks total tax receipts, which continue to grow; the second shows

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Natalie Shirley as Secretary of Education and Workforce Development

01/22/2015 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Natalie Shirley, president of Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City (OSU-OKC), will be joining her Cabinet as secretary of education and workforce development. Shirley will begin serving on Monday, January 26.

Shirley became president of OSU-OKC in 2011. She is the first female president in the OSU system.

Prior to her role at OSU-OKC, Shirley served as Oklahoma secretary of commerce and tourism for former Governor Brad Henry. She also served as the executive director of the Department of Commerce, the state’s leading economic development agency. Shirley has also served as president of ICI Mutual, an insurance company.

Fallin called Shirley a perfect fit for helping to achieve a goal outlined in the governor’s inaugural address: increasing educational attainment.

“One of my top priorities going

Gov. Fallin Announces Oklahoma Tax Commission Appointment

01/21/2015 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Steve Burrage to the Oklahoma Tax Commission. He will serve a six-year term succeeding Jerry Johnson, who is retiring January 31.

Burrage is chairman of the board at FirstBank in Antlers.

He also serves as secretary on the Oklahoma Board of Corrections and as chairman of the board's finance and audit committee. Fallin appointed Burrage to the Corrections Board in 2012. Burrage will resign from the Corrections Board effective January 31.

His appointment to the Tax Commission requires confirmation from the state Senate.

Burrage served as Oklahoma state auditor and inspector from 2008 until 2010. He is also a former board member of the State Chamber of Oklahoma.

"Steve Burrage has a wealth of both private and public sector experience in banking and accounting," said Fallin. "I appreciate him serving on the Tax Commission

Gov. Mary Fallin announces appointment to Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs

01/20/2015 11:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today appointed Greg Mashburn to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control Commission.

Mashburn is filling the district attorney slot on the commission. He is replacing former Tulsa County District Attorney Tim Harris, who didn't seek re-election and resigned from the commission.

Mashburn will serve the remaining four years of the seven-year term pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

In November, Mashburn was elected to serve his third term as the district attorney for Cleveland, Garvin and McClain Counties. He previously served as an assistant district attorney in Oklahoma County for nearly a decade before winning the District 21 seat in 2006.

"Greg Mashburn is a committed public servant who has spent his career making sure his community and state are safe," said Fallin. "I know he will

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

01/19/2015 06:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 19.

"Martin Luther King Jr. had a famous dream: to live in a nation where every person would be judged not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character.

Decades later, we have made tremendous progress towards that goal, but there is work yet to be done. I am asking all Oklahomans to join me in celebrating the life of Dr. King, reflecting on his vision, and contemplating what each of us can do to move us closer to making his dream a reality.”

Gov. Fallin Statement Regarding the Execution of Charles Warner

01/15/2015 07:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement tonight regarding the execution of Charles Warner.

“Justice was served tonight as the state executed Charles Warner for the heinous crime of raping and murdering an infant.

“I appreciate the professionalism shown by Department of Corrections employees during this process.” – Governor Mary Fallin

Gov. Fallin, Legislative Leaders Form Steering Committee to Develop Justice Reform Measures

01/14/2015 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today, in cooperation with legislative leaders, issued an [executive order](#) that establishes a special committee to help steer reforms to deal with nonviolent offenders with substance abuse problems and mental health issues.

Two days after declaring in her inaugural address that the state must deal with over-incarceration, Fallin formed the Oklahoma Justice Reform Steering Committee.

The six-member committee will be made up of the governor, the attorney general, the Senate president pro tempore, the speaker of the House of Representatives and the director of the state Department of Corrections and the commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, or their designees. The governor or her designee will serve as chairman.

“According to all measures, Oklahoma has some of the highest incarceration rates in the

Governor Mary Fallin’s 2015 Inaugural Address

01/12/2015 01:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – *The following is the text of Governor Mary Fallin’s 2015 Inaugural Address, as prepared for delivery:*

Elected officials, members of the court, tribal leaders, distinguished guests, and citizens of the great state of Oklahoma, it is with a deep sense of honor and humility

that I stand here today to accept the opportunity to serve a second term as your governor.

Before I begin I want to take a moment to recognize my devoted family: my loving and supportive husband Wade, our wonderful and talented children, and our family and friends, without whom we would not be here today. Thank you for your love, support and prayers over the years.

Four years ago I stood here to be sworn in for the first time.

It was a historic occasion, and I was proud and honored to serve as Oklahoma's first female governor. As I came into office, I was very much aware, as *The Bible* tells us, that to whom much is

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments to Pardon and Parole Board

01/09/2015 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Robert “Brett” Macy and the reappointment of Patricia High and Vanessa Price to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board.

Each member will serve a four-year term. Confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate is not required.

Robert “Brett” Macy, of Newalla, succeeds Dr. Marc Dreyer. Macy is a retired lieutenant from the Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD). He began his career with OCPD in 1990 and served in several capacities, including patrol officer and detective sergeant in the criminal intelligence unit. He also served as detective sergeant on the FBI Violent Crimes Task Force, coordinating special operations in the intelligence unit, and a lieutenant in the investigations bureau and operations bureau.

Prior to joining OCPD, Macy was a deputy for the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office.

During his career in law

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointment to State Board of Career and Technology Education

01/08/2015 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of David Stewart to the State Board of Career and Technology Education. He is replacing Karl Meyers, who resigned. Confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate is required for this appointment.

Stewart, of Afton, is chief administrative officer and trustee of the Oklahoma Ordinance Works Authority in Pryor, a public trust that operates the MidAmerica Industrial park. He was appointed to this position by Governor Fallin in 2013.

“David Stewart is a proven leader who has the knowledge and experience to continue the success of our state’s CareerTech system,” said Fallin. “David understands that to meet our growing workforce needs, our state must continue to produce skilled workers to qualify for today’s high-tech and high-skill jobs.”

Stewart also serves on the board of directors at the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals, the Tulsa Regional

Resolutions for 2015 and Beyond

01/05/2015 01:45 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

The New Year has started, which means it’s time for our New Year’s resolutions! My goal as governor has always been simple: to raise the standard of living in Oklahoma by creating more and better jobs. We’ve been largely successful, as Oklahoma’s unemployment rate has continued to fall and per capita income growth has risen at a rate of fifteen percent, the second highest in the nation.

That doesn’t mean we can’t do better, however. In fact, I believe there are three big areas that we need to improve for our state to continue its remarkable forward momentum. My New Years’ resolution for Oklahoma is to improve outcomes in each of the following areas, so that we can build stronger communities for generations to come.

First, **we must increase educational attainment**. Individuals need to have marketable work skills to flourish in today’s

Governor Mary Fallin Names Deby Snodgrass Secretary of Commerce and Tourism

12/30/2014 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department Executive Director Deby Snodgrass will begin serving as the director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) beginning Tuesday, January 20. She will replace ODOC Interim Director Don Hackler on that date. Snodgrass will step down from her current post at Tourism and be replaced by a new director named by the Tourism Commission.

Snodgrass also currently serves as Governor Mary Fallin’s secretary of tourism. Fallin announced today that Snodgrass will become Oklahoma secretary of commerce and tourism, combining the two cabinet-level posts.

“Oklahoma’s Commerce and Tourism departments have complimentary roles,” said Fallin. “Both are selling the state as an exciting place to visit, work and do business.

Deby has done an outstanding job managing the Oklahoma 'brand' as our secretary of tourism. Combining these

Governor Mary Fallin Christmas Statement

12/25/2014 05:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a merry Christmas and happy holiday season:

"This Christmas, my family and I wish peace, love and good tidings to all. Have a safe and wonderful Christmas, and enjoy the Holiday Season. All of us are loved by God, and we continue to give thanks for His many blessings."

Governor Mary Fallin Names Series of New Appointees in Bid to Improve Services for Veterans

12/19/2014 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin announced a series of military and veteran-related appointments today, naming a new adjutant general of the Oklahoma National Guard, new nominees to the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA), and changing her cabinet structure. The changes are designed to improve services for the state's veterans, improve coordination between the ODVA and other state agencies, and broaden the representation of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission which oversees ODVA operations.

Brig. Gen. Robbie L. Asher will be named Oklahoma adjutant general on February 2 and will command the Oklahoma Army and Air National Guard. He succeeds Maj. Gen. Myles Deering, who will become the governor's secretary of veterans affairs on February 2.

Deering will replace Maj. Gen. Rita Aragon, who the governor has named to a new position of governor's liaison for veterans affairs. Gen. Aragon will be responsible for developing

Governor Mary Fallin Fills Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission Vacancy

12/09/2014 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Leigh Gaddis to the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission. Gaddis, the first woman appointed to the Wildlife Conservation Commission, will replace the late Harland Stonecipher, pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Gaddis, of Ada, owns and also serves as a financial adviser at Gaddis & Gaddis Wealth Management, a financial planning and investment firm.

“Leigh Gaddis is an avid outdoor enthusiast and a leader within the community,” said Fallin. “She brings a unique background to the commission as well as a passion for hunting, fishing and the outdoors.”

Gaddis is a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association; a member of Safari Club International; annual participant in the Oklahoma City Gun Club’s Women on Target Shooting Clinic; and helped host the Governor’s Big Buck Hunt in

Secretary of Commerce Larry Parman Steps Down

12/03/2014 04:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce Larry V. Parman today announced plans to step down at the end of the year. Parman has served as both Secretary of Commerce and director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) since October of 2013. Prior to his service at ODOC, Parman served as Oklahoma’s secretary of state.

Governor Mary Fallin praised Parman’s service and his commitment to moving Oklahoma forward.

“Larry Parman worked tirelessly in both his Cabinet-level positions for the people of Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “As secretary of state, he helped streamline operations within the agency, saving taxpayer dollars and implementing a ‘client-first’ philosophy to better serve Oklahoma businesses and individuals.

“When he took the reins at ODOC, I asked him to find creative ways to use his agency to help lift our state out of the recession and create jobs. His leadership at the

Celebrating a Year of Great Accomplishments for Oklahoma

12/01/2014 05:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

In 2014 we have celebrated many successes. Oklahoma’s economy continues to thrive, thousands of men and women have rejoined the workforce after a long national recession, and almost every day we hear of a new Oklahoma small business opening its doors and enriching its community. Pro-growth policies, a commitment to workforce development, a high quality of life and – of course – a strong work ethic have all contributed to our growth and are earning our state national and even international attention and kudos.

I’m glad to see what I call the Oklahoma Comeback pick up more steam this year. As a state we have many things to be thankful for this holiday season.

With Christmas just days away, everyone is in the holiday spirit, including myself. Since the “Twelve Days of Christmas” is one of my favorite carols, here’s a list of twelve great developments we can be thankful for this

Gov. Fallin to Light State Capitol Christmas Tree

12/01/2014 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will take part tomorrow in the annual Christmas tree lighting on the south steps of the Oklahoma Capitol. The 30-foot-tall artificial tree, adorned with nearly 2,000 energy-saving LED lights, is to be lit at about 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 2.

The tree-lighting ceremony is part of an annual event that hosts an afternoon of festivities.

Elementary school students from across the state will decorate Christmas trees at various locations in the Capitol building. They will be joined by performing arts groups singing Christmas carols and performing dance routines.

Santa Claus and Rumble, mascot for the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball team, will also be on hand for the tree-lighting ceremony. Bryan and Donna Komers, a couple from Noble with five adopted children, will help the governor light the Christmas tree.

“Lighting the state Christmas tree is a great way to kick off the holiday

Governor Mary Fallin Thanksgiving Statement

11/27/2014 05:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the Thanksgiving Holiday:

“As we prepare to celebrate another Thanksgiving, I continue to be thankful to the people of Oklahoma for giving me the opportunity to serve as their governor. I will also take this opportunity to reflect on all of God’s blessings, like my wonderful family, friends and colleagues.

“I continue to be grateful for the brave men and women of the military and their families. They make tremendous sacrifices to protect the freedoms we continue to enjoy every day.

“And finally, I would like to offer Oklahomans everywhere a safe, happy and blessed holiday.”

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Oklahoma’s Waiver to the No Child Left Behind Law Being Resto

11/24/2014 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the U.S. Department of Education announced it was restoring Oklahoma’s waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education law for the remainder of this school year. Reinstating the waiver ensures that Oklahoma schools will retain control of up to \$30 million in federal funds.

“The Oklahoma State Department of Education and Oklahoma schools should be afforded the maximum amount of flexibility when using federal dollars. Restoring

Oklahoma's NCLB waiver is the correct decision and will help us get more money in the classroom."

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on President Obama's Amnesty Plan

11/20/2014 12:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding President Obama's plan to grant amnesty to up to five million illegal immigrants in the United States:

"The United States is a nation of immigrants, and I am proud that people from all across the world want to come here to enjoy our freedoms and our prosperity. We are also a nation of laws. Like all nations, the U.S. has borders. Those laws and those borders must be respected, for reasons ranging from national security to economics to health.

"President Obama's decision to circumvent a newly elected Congress and grant amnesty to 5 million illegal immigrants undermines the rule of law. It rewards people who have illegally crossed our borders and broken our laws. His decision is an insult to the millions of people around the world trying to come to the U.S. through legal means. It's also an affront to the American people, who elected

Gov. Fallin Calls on EPA and Corps of Engineers to Withdraw Waters of the United States Proposal

11/14/2014 10:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today called on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to withdraw their current proposal to change the definition of "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act.

Fallin said the new proposal, which places more water and land under the jurisdiction and regulation of the federal government, amounts to a power grab that will hurt state economies and destroy jobs.

The EPA and Corps proposal will expand federal jurisdiction of navigable waters nationwide and will require additional permitting for development in areas near water bodies.

"The EPA and the Corps are imposing an additional layer of bureaucracy instead of providing common sense and clarity in the WOTUS proposal," said Fallin. "This proposal is confusing and is going to delay development of critical infrastructure. It also makes development rights of

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement Following Certification of Second Congressional District Election

11/12/2014 06:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the Oklahoma State Election Board chose to certify the election of Markwayne Mullin.

“After meeting with the state attorney general’s office, the Oklahoma State Election Board has decided to certify the election of Markwayne Mullin in Oklahoma’s Second Congressional District. Congratulations to Congressman Mullin on successfully winning a second term.”

Governor Fallin also offered condolences to the family of Earl Everett, who passed away during the congressional campaign.

“Earl’s family and friends should be proud of the campaign he ran, as well as his service in the military as well as a school teacher,” said Fallin. “I am praying for them during this difficult time.”

Governor Mary Fallin’s Feeding Oklahoma Drive Exceeds Goal

11/12/2014 03:30 PM CST

Drive Raises More than 4 Million Meals for Hungry Oklahomans

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin’s fifth annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive raised more than 4million meals for hungry Oklahomans this holiday season. The drive, which ran October 1-31, exceeded its goal of raising 2 million meals. In total, the drive collected \$519,543 in donations and 1,692,743 pounds of food.

“I am continually impressed by the support and generosity shown by Oklahomans in all 77 counties, and this year’s food drive proves to be no different,” Governor Mary Fallin said. “I want to especially thank all the sponsors and the caring people of this state who donated their time and resources to help feed our Oklahoma neighbors. Oklahoma is a great place because of its people. Their support of this food drive ensures more Oklahoma families will have warm meals this winter.”

The Feeding Oklahoma Drive

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Veterans Day

11/11/2014 05:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement concerning Veterans Day:

“The debt owed to our nation’s veterans, active duty servicemen and servicewomen and their families is something that can never fully be repaid.

“This Veterans Day, I am encouraging Oklahomans everywhere to join me in celebrating these heroic individuals who put their lives on the line for our freedoms.

Let us also remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and never came home from battle, and continue to pray for them as well as their families.”

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints James 'Bo' Reese as Oklahoma Chief Information Officer

11/06/2014 01:45 PM CST

CIO oversees unified information technology operation for all agencies

OKLAHOMA CITY– GovernorMary Fallin today appointed James “Bo” Reese as state government’s chief information officer, a position that oversees information technology services for all state agencies.

Reese, who has served as interim CIO since January, has held multiple technology and management positions in state government since 1995.

“Bo’s exceptional interim leadership of IT consolidation – one of the largest, most complex initiatives underway in state government – showed that he is clearly the right CIO at the right time for Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “Technology is a major part of everything we do in government today, and Bo has convincingly demonstrated the ability to ensure that the state uses the best technology for the job at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers.”

The CIO,

Honoring Our Military Families

11/03/2014 01:00 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

This Tuesday, November 11, is Veterans Day. As they always do, Oklahomans will honor those who have fought for this country and served in our military.

What many may not realize, however, is that the entire month of November is National Military Family Appreciation Month. It is intended as a time to reflect on the selfless commitment and devotion of the family members standing behind those in the armed services.

Oklahoma has approximately 10,000 soldiers and airmen in the Oklahoma National Guard. More than half of them have been deployed overseas for one or multiple tours of duty. Right now there are about 70 men and women deployed in Afghanistan who are due back in the next few months.

Every time those men and women are deployed, they leave behind children, wives, husbands, family and friends. They miss birthdays and holidays. There are soldiers fighting overseas while their children say their

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Gov. Fallin Responds to Violence Against Ten Commandments Monument: “Our Monument will be Rebu

10/24/2014 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today condemned the violence against the Ten Commandments Monument at the Oklahoma State Capitol and volunteered to help raise private funds to restore it.

"This monument was built to memorialize the historical significance of the Ten Commandments in guiding our own laws and lives," said Fallin. "It is absolutely appalling that someone would vandalize anything at the Oklahoma State Capitol – the People's Building – much less a monument of such significance."

The Ten Commandments monument was paid for with private funds from Rep. Mike Ritze. Governor Fallin has offered her assistance to Rep. Ritze to help lead any private fundraising efforts necessary to rebuild the monument.

"Our monument will be rebuilt and restored," said Fallin. "The people of Oklahoma will not stand for acts of violence against the Capitol or its

Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation Sign License Plate Compact

10/23/2014 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby today announced that the state and the tribe have signed a compact to offer "Chickasaw Nation" license plates to Chickasaw citizens.

Anoatubby said that many Chickasaw citizens have requested license plates which recognize their tribal citizenship.

“We are very pleased to work with the state to offer Chickasaw Nation license plates,” said Anoatubby. “These tags offer Chickasaw citizens a very visible way to demonstrate their pride in being Chickasaw, while keeping vehicle tag funding for schools, roads, state employee retirement, wildlife conservation and other state programs intact.”

Fallin said the compact is another example of the state of Oklahoma working together with the Chickasaw Nation on a project which benefits both the tribe and the state.

“The Chickasaw Nation and the state of Oklahoma

New Report Predicts Oklahoma to be a National Leader in Economic Growth in 2015

10/22/2014 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – A new report by Standard & Poor’s, a national financial research firm, predicts that Oklahoma will be one of four states to lead the nation in economic growth next year. The report forecasts how the national economy is expected to fare through the remainder of this year and into the next. It predicts Oklahoma’s economic output will grow by more than 3.5 percent.

Governor Mary Fallin said the report was another sign that Oklahoma’s economy is once again moving in the right direction and continues to grow.

“This report from Standard & Poor’s is another indication that Oklahoma’s economy is back on track and our families and businesses are doing better,” said Fallin. “Since 2011 we’ve created over 102,000 jobs, seen median household income grow at twice the national average, and replenished the Rainy Day Fund from just \$2.03 to over \$530 million. Our job now

Governor Mary Fallin Calls for White House to Issue Comprehensive Plan to Fight Ebola

10/16/2014 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today called on President Obama to release a comprehensive plan to fight Ebola.

“Oklahoma is doing everything it can to prepare for any potential threat of Ebola,” said Fallin. “Our state agencies are coordinating with health care professionals; our hospitals are preparing themselves to isolate and treat any potential outbreaks; and protocols are being updated and reviewed.

“What is lacking now is a commitment from our federal partners to establish a comprehensive plan to reduce risk for our citizens. Travelers, including non-citizens, are coming and going freely from Ebola-infected hot zones to the United States. Security and screening measures at international airports have widely been reported to be inadequate. Our lack of border security, particularly at the Southern border,

means we have no real way of knowing who is coming into this country or whether or not they are

State Regents Certify PASS Standards, Oklahoma to Reapply for No Child Left Behind Waiver

10/16/2014 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education today certified Oklahoma’s PASS academic standards as “college and career ready.” That certification is a benchmark meant to ensure that Oklahomans graduating from high school have demonstrated proficiency in subject matter that prepares them both for entry level college courses and career-relevant skills. The certification is also significant because the U.S. Department of Education uses “college and career ready” certification as a qualifier for states to apply for a waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind education law. Reestablishing Oklahoma’s waiver, which it [lost in response to the state’s decision to repeal Common Core](#), would ensure that Oklahoma schools retain control over up to \$30 million in federal funds.

The State Regents performed a

Gov. Fallin Applauds NORDAM Contract

10/15/2014 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after NORDAM announced it was adding 300 jobs to Tulsa to assist with a new contract with Pratt & Whitney Canada. [Read more here.](#)

“The aerospace industry in Oklahoma continues to expand, underscored today by NORDAM’s announcement regarding its partnership with Pratt & Whitney Canada and Gulfstream which will create 300 new jobs at its facilities in Tulsa. NORDAM is an Oklahoma-founded company that has grown to become a global leader in aerospace. Still managed by Oklahomans, the company is not only a major asset to Tulsa but to our entire state.

“NORDAM’s consistent success is a reflection on Oklahoma’s pro-business climate and our ability as a state to

State Struggling to Pay for Current Medicaid Costs; Obamacare Expansion Would Be Irresponsible

10/15/2014 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today reiterated her opposition to the Medicaid expansion in Obamacare after the Oklahoma Health Care Authority reported that it would need an additional \$164 million to maintain Medicaid at its current level. Read more [here](#).

“There are currently 818,000 Oklahomans on Medicaid,” said Fallin. “These are low-income Oklahomans, children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities. Because of the sky-rocketing cost of medical care, and the failure of

Obamacare to bend that cost curve, states are increasingly struggling just to keep these individuals covered.

“The Oklahoma Health Care Authority estimates we need \$164 million more just to cover our current obligations. I am committed to finding the resources we need to ensure that

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointment to Grand River Dam Authority

10/14/2014 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Joe Vandevier to the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA). He is replacing Allen Wright, whose term expired.

Vandevier will serve a five-year term ending in August 2019, and will represent industrial and commercial customers.

He is the founder and current managing member of Downhole Dynamics, a company that provides business and technical consulting for enhanced production in the oil and gas industry.

“Joe Vandevier’s experience in management, business development and engineering brings a valuable perspective to the GRDA,” said Fallin. “His leadership and dedication will serve the GRDA and its members well.”

Vandevier has worked in a variety of key roles in the oil and gas industry for the last 40 years. He was vice president of operations in the U.S., Canada and Russia for Centrilift. He also served as president and chief operating

Governor Mary Fallin Thanks Deaconess Hospital after Ebola Threat Ruled Out

10/10/2014 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after Deaconess Hospital in Oklahoma City confirmed a patient being monitored for Ebola-like symptoms was not at risk of contracting the virus. There are currently no patients identified as Ebola threats in the state of Oklahoma.

“I am relieved – as is everyone – that the sick patient at Deaconess Hospital is not at risk for the Ebola virus.

“My thanks go out to the staff at Deaconess for their professionalism and their preparation. Oklahoma health care professionals know that Ebola is a risk. They are trained to respond to Ebola threats, to treat Ebola patients and to isolate and contain any infectious diseases.

“Today that training paid off. Hospital officials coordinated with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control to ensure all proper protocols and safety precautions were followed. Should this have

Governor Mary Fallin Praises \$1.3 Billion Koch Nitrogen Investment in Oklahoma

10/09/2014 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued a statement celebrating today’s groundbreaking of a \$1.3 billion expansion of Koch Nitrogen’s plant in Enid, Oklahoma. Koch Nitrogen currently employs approximately 2100 Oklahomans.

“Today’s groundbreaking represents a billion dollar investment in the state and the people of Oklahoma. Koch Nitrogen is a large Oklahoma employer and I am grateful for its continued confidence in our workforce and our continued economic growth.

“Four years ago I took office and began pushing pro-growth economic policies that would deliver an economic environment conducive to job creation, business retention and business expansion. This major investment in the state – along with the more than 102,000 jobs created since 2011 – demonstrates that those policies are working and benefitting people and communities across Oklahoma.” – Governor Mary Fallin

Calling on all Oklahomans to Help Fight Hunger

10/06/2014 05:00 PM CDT

The holiday season is right around the corner, and Oklahomans are preparing to spend time with their family and count God’s blessings. For many of us that means enjoying large, home-cooked meals.

This year, as we plan for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, I am asking all Oklahomans to remember the approximately 675,000 people in the state who struggle with hunger daily.

Approximately 13 percent of Oklahomans are classified as “food insecure,” meaning they don’t know where their next meal will come from. That includes one in four Oklahoma children.

All Oklahomans can do their part to drive those numbers down. Last week I announced the kick-off of the fifth annual Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive. This year we have our most ambitious goal yet: raising 2 million meals to help feed Oklahoma families, children and seniors.

The drive runs through October 31 and will benefit the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the

Gov. Fallin Responds to SCOTUS Decision to Allow Gay Marriage

10/06/2014 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement in response to the United States Supreme Court’s decision to reject the appeal of a lower court ruling striking down an Oklahoma constitutional provision defining marriage as the union between one man and one woman. The Oklahoma amendment passed in 2004 by a vote of the people, with over 75 percent of voters supporting it.

“The people of Oklahoma have the right to determine how marriage is defined. In 2004, Oklahomans exercised that right, voting by a margin of 3-1 to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

“The will of the people has now been overridden by unelected federal justices, accountable to no one. That is both undemocratic and a violation of states’ rights. Rather than allowing states to make their own policies that reflect the values and views of their residents, federal judges have inserted themselves into a state

OSDH Monitoring Ebola Situation in Dallas

10/01/2014 02:00 PM CDT

No Immediate Threat Exists To Oklahoma Residents

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is reassuring the public that no immediate threat exists to Oklahoma residents from the Ebola case confirmed at a hospital in Dallas. At this time, the case is isolated and transmission of the disease cannot occur without direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected patient. OSDH officials will continue to work with hospitals and provide up-to-date communication, guidance and tools to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens.

Since the Ebola epidemic escalated in West Africa this summer, the OSDH began communicating status updates and CDC guidance to Oklahoma healthcare providers and hospitals.

"We will continue to work with medical providers and hospitals regarding the use of screening procedures to rapidly identify any potential cases of Ebola virus disease to ensure that

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Oklahoma Victory in Anti-Obamacare lawsuit

09/30/2014 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding U.S. District Judge Ronald White’s ruling in favor of a 2012 lawsuit filed by the state of Oklahoma. The suit challenges the constitutionality of provisions within the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“For years, I have argued that Obamacare represents bad policy, irresponsible spending, an outrageous expansion of federal authority into the private sector, and unconstitutional law. Since 2012, the state of Oklahoma has been fighting the implementation of the ACA, both to protect our citizens from the negative effects of

this law – including devastating cuts to Medicare -- and to stand up for Constitutional principles.

“Today, Oklahomans won a major victory, as a United States District Court ruled in favor of Oklahoma’s lawsuit challenging the implementation of Obamacare. My thanks go out to Attorney General Scott Pruitt and his team

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Moore Attack

09/30/2014 12:45 PM CDT

Perpetrator “will face the full weight of the law”

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after Cleveland County District Attorney Greg Mashburn filed charges against the suspected perpetrator of an attack at Vaughan Foods in Moore. The DA indicated he would seek the death penalty.

“The attack at Vaughan Foods was an act of cowardice, brutality and barbarism. The perpetrator of that attack will be brought to justice and face the full weight of the law. My thoughts and prayers continue to go out to the victims of this terrible crime as well as their families.

“Since the attack was reported, I have been communicating with law enforcement as well as Oklahoma’s Department of Homeland Security to ensure a thorough investigation is conducted into the motives of the attacker. That investigation is still ongoing, and it is unclear at this time

Gov. Fallin Welcomes Approximately 900 Boeing Employees to Oklahoma

09/29/2014 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after Boeing announced it would be bringing approximately 900 employees to its Oklahoma City operations. (Read more here: <http://boeing.mediaroom.com/9-29-14-Boeing-to-Consolidate-Defense-Services-and-Support-Work-in-Oklahoma-City-and-St-Louis>)

“Oklahoma looks forward to welcoming 900 new Boeing employees to our community. We will work to ensure this transition goes smoothly for the families who are affected. I am certain they will enjoy Oklahoma’s community-focused environment and our great quality of life.

“Oklahoma looks forward to continuing a long and successful partnership with Boeing and its employees.” – Governor Mary Fallin

Governor Mary Fallin Kicks Off Feeding Oklahoma Drive

09/29/2014 02:30 PM CDT

Governor Seeks Needed Donations for Holiday Season

OKLAHOMA CITY (Sept. 29, 2014) – Governor Mary Fallin kicked off her fifth annual Feeding Oklahoma Drive today with the goal of raising 2 million meals to help feed hungry families, children, and seniors. The month-long food drive will benefit the [Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma](#), the [Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma](#), and their partner agencies across the state.

“Time and again, Oklahomans have proven themselves to be the most caring and giving individuals in the nation,” Fallin said. “Last year, Oklahomans from all 77 counties came together and donated over 2 million meals in time for the holiday season. This year, we can do even more for the hungry in our state.”

Oklahoma consistently ranks among the top hungriest states in the nation, with more

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Gov. Fallin, Kevin Durant Kick Off Governor’s Get Fit Challenge to Fight Childhood Obesity

09/26/2014 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, the NBA’s reigning most valuable player Kevin Durant and Oklahoma City Thunder mascot Rumble were joined today by several hundred school children to launch the 2014 Governor’s Get Fit Challenge on the north lawn of the state Capitol.

The Governor’s Get Fit Challenge complements existing youth-focused programs to help children and families in Oklahoma make the healthy choice the easy choice. Highlights of the challenge include:

- FitnessGram - A free tool available to Oklahoma schools (grade 3-8) that assess five areas of physical health – body composition, aerobic capacity, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. FitnessGram, sponsored by the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), the Oklahoma State Department of Health

(OSDH) and BlueCross BlueShield of Oklahoma determine whether students are in a “healthy fitness zone” for their

Oklahoma Exceeds Complete College America Year-Two Goal

09/25/2014 12:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Committed to help drive the state’s economy by providing a more educated workforce, Oklahoma’s public and private higher education institutions and career technology centers have significantly exceeded their Complete College America (CCA) year-two goal.

Oklahoma’s goal for CCA is to increase the number of degrees and certificates earned by an average of 1,700 per year, from 30,500 annually in 2011 to 50,900 annually by 2023. In year two of the initiative, Oklahoma’s postsecondary institutions surpassed the annual goal, conferring 3,577 additional degrees and certificates. In the first year, the number of degrees and certificates awarded also exceeded the annual goal, increasing by 2,945.

“Oklahoma’s economy is moving in the right direction,” said Governor Mary Fallin. “In fact, since 2011 we’ve been able to create over 100,000 new jobs. For that forward momentum to continue, we know

Gov. Fallin Applauds International Paper for Restarting Idled Operation in Valliant

09/22/2014 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded today’s announcement by International Paper that it will restart the previously idled No. 3 machine at its Valliant containerboard mill.

“International Paper’s \$90 million investment in McCurtain County will result in dozens of new jobs for Oklahoma families, and make the Valliant mill one of the largest and most efficient containerboard mills in North America,” said Fallin. “Due in part to Oklahoma’s commitment to pro-business, pro-growth policies, we were able to restart the previously idled machine and put Oklahomans back to work.”

The No. 3 machine is scheduled to be operational in the summer of 2015 and will create approximately 65 new jobs. This will also allow the plant to produce an additional 360,000 tons of capacity to produce high quality medium, a packaging material.

“We are excited about the Valliant project.

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on A-F Grades

09/17/2014 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s release of the 2014 “A-F”

school report cards. Approximately one-third of all schools (646) improved their score in 2014 compared to last year.

“Oklahoma has great teachers and administrators, and they have my thanks for the difficult, important job they are doing.

“The A-F grading system is designed to empower parents by providing them with an easily understood measurement of how a school is performing. This year’s grades demonstrate that Oklahoma has hundreds of “A” schools and many pockets of excellence. It also continues to show – as we have known for years – that there are many schools that are struggling. The superintendents and teachers of schools receiving a D or an F must remember: a bad grade is not a punishment; it is a call to action. Parents should

Governor Thanks Health Care Workers

09/15/2014 10:00 AM CDT

By Andy Rieger Transcript Executive Editor

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin thanked physicians and other heart-health workers for their part in trying to improve the state's overall health.

Fallin, speaking Friday at a heart health conference sponsored by Norman Regional Health System, said one in four Oklahoma deaths are from cardiovascular diseases.

"It's a killer in our state," Fallin told the guests at Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center.

She commended the attendees for taking time to better their education on heart health in order to share best practices with patients. Proper nutrition, smoking cessation and lifestyle changes will make a difference, she said.

"Oklahomans don't always know how to take care of themselves," she said.

Fallin's father died of heart disease in his 50s and her mother later died in her 70s with heart problems.

Gov. Fallin Announces Drought Grants Available for Projects Highlighting Responsible Use of Water

09/11/2014 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has \$1.5 million available in drought grants for cities, counties, water districts and other public entities to help fund projects that highlight responsible use of water.

“Responsible use of water remains the most immediate and effective way to prevent future water shortages for many communities and water systems in Oklahoma,” said

Fallin. “As the state enters its fourth year of ongoing drought, water efficiency and the reuse of water are becoming increasingly important to protect the water supplies that communities currently use.”

To receive funding from the Water for 2060 Drought Grant Program this fiscal year, the applicant and the project must both be eligible. Eligible entities include counties, towns and municipalities, public works authorities and rural water/sewer districts.

Grants are capped at \$500,000. The deadline for

Governor Mary Fallin Orders Flags to Be Flown at Half-Staff to Honor 9/11 Victims

09/11/2014 07:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has ordered all American and Oklahoma flags on state property to be flown at half-staff from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Thursday to honor the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America.

“September 11 is a day to mourn and remember those who were victims to the worst terror attack in our nation's history,” said Fallin. “As we continue to pray for their families and friends, let us also remember and pay tribute to the heroic actions of first responders and volunteers who acted quickly and selflessly -- sometimes even sacrificing their own lives -- to save others.

“As we look back 13 years ago today, we also should keep in mind our troops who serve in our nation’s military. These brave men and women willingly leave the comfort of their homes to place themselves in harm’s way to ensure the citizens of Oklahoma and the United States can continue to enjoy

Gov. Fallin Announces Record Increases in Education Resources from School Land Holdings

09/10/2014 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that public schools, colleges and universities have received record earnings during the last four fiscal years from funds distributed by the Oklahoma Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO).

More than \$519.9 million has been distributed to the CLO’s education beneficiaries during the 2011 through 2014 fiscal years, according to the agency. That amount is 57 percent, or \$188.7 million, more than the \$331.2 million distributed during the next-highest four-year period in state history (2007-2010).

“This is great news for public education,” said Fallin. “This money provides much-needed additional funds for school districts, colleges and universities. The increase in CLO dollars is one more way to supplement the \$150 million increase legislators appropriated for K-12 education in the last two years. I appreciate the hard work of the land office commissioners and CLO Secretary Harry

Oklahoma: Leading the Way towards North American Energy Independence

09/08/2014 04:45 PM CDT

Oklahoma is an undisputed leader in the energy industry. We are the fourth-largest natural gas producing state in the country, the fifth-largest oil producing state, and the sixth-largest state for wind power.

Some people talk about an “all of the above” energy strategy. Oklahoma is doing it. We are helping to lead an energy revolution that has made North American Energy Independence – once an impossible goal – within reach.

In 2013, Oklahoma produced 111,368 thousand barrels of oil, an increase of 67 percent from 2009. And while we are prospering from an oil boom, we’re also building the infrastructure for alternative energies like natural gas and wind power. Take a drive west along Interstate 40 and you’ll not only have access to the largest number of CNG fueling stations per capita in the country, you’ll also see a rapidly increasing number of wind turbines providing Oklahomans with affordable, reliable

Tulsa World Editorial: Workers Compensation Costs Decline - Again

09/05/2014 08:30 AM CDT

- State agency reform paying off

By World’s Editorial Writers | Posted: Friday, Sept. 5, 2014

Another year, another reduction in workers’ compensation costs.

On Tuesday, the National Council on Compensation Insurance filed the key report used by insurance companies in setting workers’ comp rates in the state. The report shows an overall cost level decrease of 7.8 percent for next year.

Last year’s report had a 14.6 percent cost decline.

This is good news for Oklahoma businesses, and a further sign that the state’s workers’ compensation reform effort is paying off exactly as planned.

The State Chamber of Oklahoma estimates that since workers’ comp reform was passed in the state, Oklahoma businesses have saved more than \$220 million. That’s money that employers can use to expand, hire more people, offer

Governor Mary Fallin Issues Statement Regarding DPS Execution Report

09/04/2014 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding a report issued by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) concerning the execution of Clayton Lockett. The report was the result of an independent review,

requested by Governor Fallin, of the Lockett execution and the state's execution protocols. It contains suggested updates to Department of Corrections (DOC) execution protocols.

"My thanks go out to Commissioner Michael Thompson and his team for conducting a thorough review of Clayton Lockett's execution. In the coming days and weeks, I expect the Department of Corrections to implement the proposed improvements in protocols to ensure that future executions are performed effectively. In fact, I have been told by DOC Director Robert Patton that his agency has already taken steps to rewrite its execution protocol in a manner that is consistent with these recommendations.

"I continue

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Creation of Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity

09/04/2014 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today announced the creation of a Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity to link researchers with policy makers and energy industry experts. The council will be headed by Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment Michael Teague. Fallin's announcement came during the Fourth Annual Governor's Energy Conference, held in Oklahoma City.

"Oklahoma has always had seismic activity," said Fallin. "But the reality is, we are seeing more earthquakes today than we did several decades ago. It's important we study this issue and have sound science that can inform decisions made in both the public and private sector. This new council will link researchers with the energy industry and policymakers to ensure we are maximizing communication and access to information. We can't examine a complex issue like this in a vacuum; everyone needs to be at the same table and talking."

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Vehicle Tag Compact with the Choctaw Nation

09/03/2014 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the state of Oklahoma has signed a vehicle tag compact with the Choctaw Nation.

The compact, signed during last weekend's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival, establishes how the state and tribe will work together to issue Choctaw vehicle tags.

"The state of Oklahoma and the Choctaw Nation already are important partners in economic development, education, health care and transportation infrastructure," said Fallin. "This is just another example of an opportunity for state leaders and tribal leaders to get together to strengthen our partnerships."

Under the compact, Choctaw citizens who want to purchase a Choctaw tag may go to a state tag agent and present their citizenship card. They will pay all the same fees and taxes that a nontribal person would to complete the same transaction.

The Choctaw Nation plans to give its citizens who purchase a

Governor Mary Fallin to President Obama: Stop Playing Politics with Our Children's Education

08/28/2014 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today called on the Obama Administration to stop playing politics with children's education and reverse its decision to strip Oklahoma of its No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver. The federal government today announced that it would not continue to grant Oklahoma schools a NCLB waiver. The change in designation came in response to the state's decision to repeal the Common Core State Standards and replace them with college and career ready standards developed by Oklahomans. As a result of Oklahoma losing its waiver, schools may have to reexamine their budgets to comply with NCLB federal requirements.

Common Core was repealed when the governor signed bipartisan legislation that passed with overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate (HB 3399 passed 71-18 in the House and 37-10 in the Senate).

"It is outrageous that President Obama and Washington bureaucrats are trying to dictate how Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin and Insurance Commissioner Doak Partner on Earthquake Insurance Education

08/27/2014 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John D. Doak recently worked together to ensure that Oklahoma consumers receive the most accurate information possible when acquiring earthquake insurance.

Fallin approved an emergency rule adopted by Doak to require all licensed producers and adjusters with the property line of authority to complete one hour of continuing education on the topic of earthquake insurance every two years.

"This emergency rule will ensure insurance agents in our state stay up-to-date on earthquake information," said Fallin. "It's important as the market for earthquake insurance expands in Oklahoma that residents get reliable and accurate information from insurance agents to help them consider whether they need this additional coverage."

"Working with Governor Fallin to approve this rule is an important step for consumers who are seeking clarification on

Improvements to rail crossings planned as ODOT and Gov. Fallin announce \$100 million initiative

08/26/2014 03:00 PM CDT

For too many drivers in Oklahoma, a faded railroad crossing sign is their only warning that a 250 ton locomotive is about to cross their path.

Tuesday, Gov. Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation announced a new initiative to fast-track hundreds of projects to improve more than 300 rail crossings statewide and upgrade safety warning features on rail crossings across Oklahoma. Many of these crossings have only rail crossing signs or faint pavement markings and no flashing lights or cross arms to serve as additional warning for motorists of oncoming trains.

At a press conference Tuesday at the State Capitol, Gov. Mary Fallin was joined by Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley, ODOT Executive Director Mike Patterson and rail company representatives in announcing the development of a plan for \$100 million in improvements to rail crossings across the state. These improvements are being funded through combining proceeds from the

Gov. Fallin and First Gentleman Christensen to Host 18th Annual Septemberfest Saturday, Sept. 6

08/22/2014 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY –Preparations are underway for the 18th annual Septemberfest to be held Saturday, September 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the grounds of the Governor’s Mansion and the Oklahoma History Center. Hosted by Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen, Septemberfest is a free event for the whole family.

“Septemberfest is a beloved fall tradition for many Oklahoma families,” said Governor Fallin. “The First Gentleman and I are excited to open the Governor’s Mansion and its beautiful grounds to Oklahomans from across our great state as we proudly host the 18th annual Septemberfest.”

A celebration of what makes Oklahoma unique; Septemberfest features over 50 attractions for people of all ages. Activities featured at this year’s Septemberfest include pony rides, a chalk artist, clowns and face-painting, puppet making, inflatables, carriage rides, live

Oklahoma a Top State for Open Data Policies

08/22/2014 10:15 AM CDT

Roll Call: What’s Your State’s Open Data Score?

By Anne L. Kim

Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, and Utah scored the highest in an assessment of state open data policies and portals by the Center for Data Innovation.

The [report](#) from the Center for Data Innovation- which is affiliated with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation - scored states, with points issued based on whether they had state-wide open data policies or a city that had one, whether they had open data portals or transparency portals as well certain factors about their open data policies and portals, like machine-readability and whether policies extended to all government data or just certain

Governor Mary Fallin to Host Fourth Annual Energy Conference

08/21/2014 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will join energy industry officials, academic experts and key policy makers in Oklahoma City on Thursday, September 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Cox Convention Center for the 2014 Governor’s Energy Conference.

This year’s conference is presented by Governor Fallin and the office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment in partnership with the State Chamber of Oklahoma.

“Oklahoma is a worldwide leader in the energy industry,” said Fallin. “Energy – which includes both fossil fuels and renewable sources like wind power – is also our state’s largest driver of economic growth and job creation. With approximately one in four Oklahoma jobs being energy related, I am proud this conference continues to foster relationships between industry leaders, academics and policy makers to ensure continued prosperity for this industry within the state.”

Gov. Fallin Applauds Selection of Jari Askins as Interim Head of Pardon and Parole Board

08/18/2014 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the selection of former Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins as interim executive director of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board.

“Jari Askins is a dedicated and universally respected public servant with a keen knowledge of pardon and parole issues,” said Fallin. “Having served in all three branches of government - including as former chairman of the Pardon and Parole Board - she brings a unique perspective and unparalleled experience to the position. I know she will serve the state well as interim executive director.”

Askins, a native of Duncan, served as Oklahoma’s 15th lieutenant governor in 2007. She passed up seeking re-election to run for governor. Askins lost to Fallin in the November 2010 general election.

Askins served as a Stephens County special district judge for eight years, from 1982-1990. In 1991, she was appointed to the Pardon and Parole

Inhofe, Fallin Praise Full, Permanent Restoration of Surplus Equipment Programs

08/14/2014 12:00 PM CDT

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today praised an announcement from the Department of Defense's (DOD) Defense Logistics Agency to fully and permanently restore the DOD surplus equipment programs that benefit Oklahoma counties, school districts and rural fire departments:

“The notification from the Department of Defense to fully and permanently restore the programs that provide state and local agencies with surplus vehicles and equipment is welcome news and will benefit Oklahoma counties, school districts and rural fire departments,” said Inhofe. **“These programs provide critical assistance to state and local agencies that rely on the used equipment to bridge the gap in their equipment needs, including trucks that are needed to help fight wildfires across the state. In July the government made**

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Support for Medicinal Use of Non-Intoxicating CBD Oil

08/13/2014 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today she would ask lawmakers to work with her in the next legislative session to support legalization of medicinal cannabidiol oil (CBD) on a limited, medically supervised, trial-only basis. CBD is a component in the cannabis (marijuana) plant. Research suggests that it may be effective to treat toddlers with rare conditions that cause seizures and strokes. CBD is an oil; it is not smoked. It is not intoxicating or used as a recreational drug.

“I do not support legalizing the recreational use of marijuana,” said Fallin. “Nor do I support a broadly-defined ‘medicinal’ marijuana use that makes it easy for healthy adults and teenagers to find and buy drugs.”

“I do support allowing potentially life-saving medicine to find its way to children in need. I am very interested in allowing limited, heavily supervised use of non-intoxicating CBD to be delivered on a

Gov. Fallin Releases Challenged Documents

08/11/2014 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released documents that an Oklahoma judge ruled previously are protected through a deliberative process privilege.

Oklahoma County District Judge Barbara Swinton last week refused to reconsider her earlier ruling, which upheld the decision by the governor to withhold certain emails. At issue are 31 documents about a 2011 decision involving Obamacare.

“I firmly believe and the court has affirmed that it is important to protect the legal right of governors to receive candid and private advice,” said Fallin. “However, I am committed to transparency. I have decided to waive the protection provided by the court so the public can understand the process that went into the policy decision not

to implement an Obamacare exchange or Medicaid expansion, both of which would be unsustainable costs to the state and bad public policy.”

Swinton ruled earlier that the governor

Gov. Fallin Condemns Black Mass Scheduled for Oklahoma

08/11/2014 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today condemned a scheduled performance of a satanic black mass next month in Oklahoma City.

“This 'Black Mass' is a disgusting mockery of the Catholic faith, and it should be equally repellent to Catholics and non-Catholics alike,” said Fallin. “It may be protected by the First Amendment, but that doesn't mean we can't condemn it in the strongest terms possible for the moral outrage which it is. It is shocking and disgusting that a group of New York City ‘satanists’ would travel all the way to Oklahoma to peddle their filth here. I pray they realize how hurtful their actions are and cancel this event.”

Fallin joins Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley in criticizing the event, scheduled for Sept. 21 at the Oklahoma City Civic Center. The archbishop said the black mass “is a satanic inversion and distortion of the most sacred beliefs not only of

Gov. Fallin Applauds Koch Jobs Announcement in Enid

08/06/2014 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded today’s announcement by Koch Nitrogen Company, LLC that it will begin construction in mid-September on a \$1.3 billion expansion project at its Enid facility:

“Koch Nitrogen's \$1.3 billion expansion in Enid will mean hundreds of new jobs for Oklahoma families,” said Fallin. “The company's continued commitment to Oklahoma illustrates the success of our pro-growth policies, which include low taxes, sensible regulations and a commitment to public education that produces skilled workers. I am excited that Koch has chosen to make this investment in Oklahoma that will continue to generate even more great jobs and opportunities for our citizens.”

The project will be implemented over the next three years and will increase production capacity by more than 1 million tons per year. The project will employ up to 1,000 contractors during the 18-24 months

Oklahomans Must Care for Oklahoma Children before Illegal Immigrants

08/04/2014 05:15 PM CDT

On June 13, the first bus of illegal immigrant minors, aged 12-17, arrived at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The state of Oklahoma was given no formal notice, and no chance to

object.

After weeks of bad publicity, public outrage and political pressure, the Obama Administration announced this week that the facility will close by Friday, August 8.

That's good news for the people of Oklahoma and the men and women of Fort Sill, who will once again have the full use of their military base for the purpose it was designed for: housing and training soldiers.

What the facility's closure does not mean is an end to the ongoing border crisis, or an end to a broken immigration system that encourages men, women and children to break our laws.

The Fort Sill facility may be closed, but there is no guarantee it will not reopen in the future. In fact, the federal government extended their lease into January of next year,

Governor Mary Fallin: Fort Sill Facility for Unaccompanied Minors to be closed by Friday

08/04/2014 11:30 AM CDT

But Federal Government Extends Lease on Facility Anyway

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today received notice from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that the Fort Sill facility for illegal immigrant minors will be closed on Friday, August 8. The facility has been holding unaccompanied minors who illegally crossed the United States' southern border since June 13.

Fallin said she was pleased by the announcement, but worried the Obama administration might seek to reopen the facility sometime in the future.

"I am pleased that the Obama Administration is finally listening to the people of Oklahoma and acting to close the Fort Sill facility for illegal immigrants. However, I am disturbed the administration chose to renew its lease on the facility, thereby preserving the option of reopening it in the future.

"We know that illegal immigration naturally dips in the

Tulsa World: Great hope in future of workers compensation reform in Oklahoma

08/04/2014 10:15 AM CDT

BY JONATHAN BUXTON | Posted: Saturday, August 2, 2014

Posted: Saturday, August 2, 2014

For more than 19 years, workers compensation in Oklahoma was broken. It was failing injured workers, costing employers too much and enriching attorneys. Prior legislatures and governors attempted to repair this broken system, but nothing seemed to work. Until last year, when Gov. Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Legislature teamed up to pass Senate Bill 1062, the Administrative Workers'

Compensation Act. Their goal was to build a new system, not to put a bandage on a broken one. The work of creating this new system began last summer, and when the doors of the newly created Workers Compensation Commission opened in February, they were ready for a completely new method of handling work related injuries. Not only was the commission ready to handle the caseload, it understood the goal of the

Gov. Fallin Demands Answers from Pres. Obama on Illegal Immigration and Fort Sill

07/28/2014 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In a [letter](#) to President Barack Obama, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today called on the president to end the “secrecy” surrounding the use of military facilities around the country to hold illegal immigrant minors. One of those facilities, Fort Sill, is located in Oklahoma.

Fallin called on Obama to formally confirm and explain reports that run contrary to the messages his administration has sent to the public. In her letter, Fallin wrote that:

- Vastly more than 1200 illegal immigrants have been held at Fort Sill, despite reports designed to indicate otherwise.
- The majority of the children held at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, will never be deported and will remain in the United

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointment to Pardon and Parole Board

07/25/2014 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Patricia “Patty” High to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board.

Her appointment will take effect Monday. She will replace the late Currie Ballard and will serve the remainder of his term, which expires in January.

High, of Oklahoma City, is an attorney with her own law firm. She handles mostly civil cases and also has been appointed in Oklahoma County District Court to serve as a guardian for infants, minors and others in family domestic cases.

High previously served as a senior criminal felony prosecutor in the Oklahoma County district attorney’s office from 1989 to 2007. Her duties included being the child abuse and sexual assault division chief and serving as special prosecutor in death penalty cases. She also worked in the district attorney’s office that serves Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties.

High also served on the Council on

Tulsa World Editorial: State economic indicators point up

07/24/2014 09:30 AM CDT

- **Jobs, spending, earnings up**

Posted: Thursday, July 24

By World's Editorial Writers

Here is further evidence that Oklahoma's economy is healthy: The state's unemployment rate dropped to 4.5 percent in June, the lowest it has been in nearly six years.

The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has improved a full point since June 2013.

Only seven states can boast better employment pictures, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The comparable national rate is 6.1 percent.

There is other recent evidence of the state's prosperity.

Earlier this month, the final revenue report for the state's fiscal year showed that individual income tax receipts were up 7.7 percent compared to last year and state sales tax collections are up 4.2 percent. In other words, more money is being earned and spent in the state. ...

Oklahoma First Gentleman Wade Christensen Chairs Governors' Spouses Leadership Committee

07/22/2014 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma First Gentleman Wade Christensen has served as the Chairman of the Spouses Leadership Committee (SLC) over the last year in conjunction with Governor Mary Fallin's chairmanship of the National Governors Association (NGA) and led the spouses Summer Meeting program last week in Tennessee.

As chair, Christensen focused a number of the spouses' business programs on the topic of agriculture, including a session titled "Agriculture and America's Youth: Strengthening Communities." During the sessions, spouses heard from several guest speakers and students on how agriculture has impacted their lives and empowered them to get involved in their communities.

First Gentleman Christensen is a fourth-generation farmer from Thomas, OK. His goal as chair of the SLC was to highlight the important role that farmers and ranchers play in not only feeding America, but also in strengthening the

Oklahoma's Jobless Rate Dips to Lowest Level in Nearly Six Years

07/22/2014 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin said today Oklahoma’s pro-growth policies are working as Oklahoma enjoyed one of the largest increases in employment in the nation in June.

The state’s jobless rate last month dropped to 4.5 percent – the lowest it’s been in nearly six years. Oklahoma’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate improved a whole percentage point since June 2013.

“Creating jobs has been my number one priority,” said Fallin. “By embracing pro-growth policies like tax cuts, reining in the size of government, and reducing the regulatory burden on job creators, Oklahoma’s economy has gotten back on the right track.”

Oklahoma added 9,600 employed persons last month, according to seasonally adjusted data by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission. June’s rate was down from 4.6 percent in May and April.

About

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments to State Capitol Repair Expenditure Oversight Committee

07/18/2014 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointments of **David Thompson, Phil Kennedy** and **Steve Mason** to the State Capitol Repair Expenditure Oversight Committee. Confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate is not required.

Fallin’s appointees will join state Reps. Mark McBride, R-Moore, Earl Sears, R-Bartlesville, and R.C. Pruett, D-Antlers, who were appointed earlier by House Speaker Jeff Hickman.

The appointees are part of a nine-member bi-partisan committee, which will oversee the repairs to the Capitol. The remaining appointees will be from the Senate president pro tempore.

“I appreciate David, Phil and Steve for stepping up and taking on this challenge,” said Fallin. “Given their diverse backgrounds in finance, construction and engineering, I know they will work well alongside the leadership provided by the Oklahoma House and Senate as we proceed with restoring and

Governor Mary Fallin to Feds: Keep Your Word and Close Illegal Immigrant Facility After 120 Days

07/18/2014 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today called on the Obama Administration to keep its promise to the people of Oklahoma and close the facility housing illegal immigrant minors at Fort Sill after its 120 day lease.

The facility began housing illegal immigrant minors on June 13. At that time, representatives from the Government Services Administration explained the facility was “temporary” and that the federal government had a 120 day lease expiring on October 10.

“From the very beginning, I have opposed the housing of illegal immigrants at Fort Sill,” said Fallin. “As I have told the administration, this facility is a testament to their failure to secure the borders and enforce our laws. It is a burden to taxpayers, who are being asked to shoulder transportation, medical and education expenses. It is also a potential health hazard.

“The Obama Administration has offered promises that this is a

Governor Mary Fallin Issues Statement on Same-Sex Marriage Ruling

07/18/2014 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement in response to a ruling from 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals striking down Oklahoma's constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

"In 2004, voters had an opportunity to decide whether or not to allow same-sex marriage in Oklahoma. Seventy-six percent voted not to, and to instead define marriage as the union between one man and one woman. I was one of the many voters who cast my ballot in favor of traditional marriage.

"Today's ruling is another instance of federal courts ignoring the will of the people and trampling on the right of states to govern themselves. In this case, two judges have acted to overturn a law supported by Oklahomans. Their decision will be appealed and, I hope, overturned. As governor, I will continue to fight back against our federal government when it seeks to ignore or change laws written and

Tulsa World Editorial: Inhofe, Fallin protecting Oklahoma from the dangers of fire, bureaucrats

07/18/2014 08:30 AM CDT

- **Inhofe, Fallin look out for state**

Posted: Friday, July 18, 2014

By World's Editorial Writers

Bureaucracies aren't people. That's evidenced by two federal agencies' wrongheaded decision to cut off a grant program awarding surplus military vehicles to rural fire departments.

Thanks to some tough words by U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe and Gov. Mary Fallin, the Defense Logistics Agency, an arm of the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency struck a pact restoring the program.

Inhofe is a senior member of the Senate committees that oversee the EPA and the DOD, and he enlisted other lawmakers to keep the surplus program alive.

We're tempted to say, all's well that ends well, but before everyone moves on, let's review: Recently, the EPA and Pentagon announced they were discontinuing the program, citing the carbon emissions

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement in Support of Israel

07/17/2014 05:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement supporting Israel in its ongoing conflict with Hamas:

"I condemn the continued rocket attacks on the people of Israel by Hamas and other terrorist groups. Israel has the right to defend its citizens against any and all terrorist attacks. Israel is a friend to Oklahoma and to all of the United States, and it's important that the people of Israel know that America stands behind them. Our prayers and hopes are for a quick suspension of hostilities and a lasting peace."

Tulsa World: Gov. Fallin slams Obama on immigration, says kids will be financial burden to states

07/17/2014 08:15 AM CDT

By RANDY KREHBIEL World Staff Writer

Gov. Mary Fallin harshly criticized the Obama administration's immigration policies on Wednesday and said she fears the recent influx of unaccompanied minors from Latin America will become a financial burden to the states.

"Many of our public schools are already at capacity and need additional funding," Fallin said. "Our health-care system is strained as it is. Now, instead of allowing us to address those needs for Oklahomans, President Obama is forcing us to add an unspecified number of illegal immigrants to our public education and public health systems.

"The president is ignoring the very real needs of Oklahomans - and Americans everywhere - so that he can continue a policy of amnesty for families that want to send their children to the United States. Ultimately, it's American taxpayers who are picking up the tab."

Fallin's broadside came one day after state

Tulsa World Editorial: Workers comp reform difficult and needed

07/16/2014 10:45 AM CDT

By World's Editorial Writers

Change isn't always easy.

The state's determination to reform its workers compensation system from a litigious, inefficient and expensive judicial system to a cost-saving administrative system is a perfect example of how needed transformation can still be difficult.

Workers compensation is complex to begin with, but the process has been made more difficult by vested interests determined to win their point in court after losing it in the Legislature.

First, there was a challenge to the 2013 law's constitutionality, based on the argument that it violated the Constitution's one-topic mandate. The high court disagreed. The law went into effect.

Then, there were complaints that the state was shorting the budget for operating the old court system during the transition and that injured workers would have to wait longer for their cases to resolve. The

Governor Mary Fallin: President Obama's Immigration Policies are Failing Us

07/16/2014 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said that President Barack Obama's immigration policies are failing the American people and demanded the president and his administration reverse course on policies that amount to amnesty.

In June of 2012, Obama announced he would [issue an executive order](#) that codified provisions of the DREAM Act, stopping the United States from deporting illegal immigrant minors. Since that time, the number of unaccompanied minors apprehended at the southern border [has skyrocketed](#), from 10,146 in 2012 to over 50,000 this year. That number is expected to reach over 100,000 in the next 12 months.

"It's clear there is a direct link to President

Gov. Fallin Comments on Oklahoma Supreme Court Ruling on Common Core Legislation

07/15/2014 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the Oklahoma Supreme Court upholding House Bill 3399, which repeals the state's Common Core education standards for English and mathematics and replaces them with Oklahoma standards:

"Today the Supreme Court ruled that House Bill 3399, which repeals Common Core and directs the state of Oklahoma to develop new academic standards, is constitutional in its entirety. This bill has now been passed with large legislative

majorities, signed by the governor, and reviewed by the courts. It is now time for parents, teachers, school administrators and lawmakers to work cooperatively to implement this law. We need all parties working together to ensure that Oklahoma's new standards are rigorous and can be realistically integrated into the classroom. Working together, I know that we can design Oklahoma standards that live up to a level of excellence our parents and students expect

Oklahoma Secretary of Education and Workforce Development to Resign August 15

07/15/2014 12:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Secretary of Education and Workforce Development Robert Sommers, who also serves as the director of the Oklahoma Department of Career Technology Education, announced today that he will be resigning both positions on August 15 to spend more time with his family in Ohio.

“I am extremely proud to have served under Governor Fallin and to have helped implement policies that I believe will strengthen schools, empower students, and ultimately make Oklahoma a better and more prosperous state,” said Sommers. “Unfortunately, with my mother's passing last year my wife and I have increasing responsibilities to family that requires our return to Ohio. I wish Governor Fallin and all Oklahomans continued success as they work to raise the bar in public education, Career Tech and higher education.”

Governor Mary Fallin praised Sommers for his commitment to education and his ability to work with a variety of

Gov. Fallin Statement on Passing of Historian, State Pardon and Parole Board Member Currie Ballard

07/11/2014 09:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today said she was saddened to hear of the death of Currie Ballard, an expert on black history in Oklahoma and an appointee of hers on a state board.

“Currie Ballard was a renowned and self-taught historian who felt a calling to share his knowledge,” said Fallin. “He was particularly passionate about African-American history and culture, and the many ways they have impacted the state and people of Oklahoma.

“My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this difficult time.”

Fallin in 2011 appointed Ballard to a four-year term on the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. He earlier served on the board from 1999 to 2003.

Ballard also earlier served on the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission and previously served as historian-in-residence at Langston University for 12 years. In 2010, he was inducted into the Oklahoma Historian Hall of

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin recently made the following appointments to various boards, agencies and commissions. Confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate is not required for the following appointments.

Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court of Existing Claims

Judge L. Bradley Taylor, of Tulsa, is being reappointed as presiding judge and will serve a two-year term. He was previously appointed as presiding judge of the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court in December 2013. However, a state law that took effect Feb. 1 changed Oklahoma's compensation system to an administrative system and the compensation court became the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court of Existing Claims, which deals only with cases filed before Feb. 1.

Oklahoma State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering

Tammy Graham, of Duncan, owns Posh Salon and

Transition Continues for New Workers' Compensation System

07/09/2014 04:30 PM CDT

Transition Continues for New Workers' Compensation System

New System Is More Efficient and Effective for Workers and Employers

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the state took another step in the transition from a court-based workers' compensation system to an administrative workers' compensation system.

Beginning July 1, the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission and the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court of Existing Claims began operating as separate, stand-alone agencies. New workers' comp claims will be processed only by the commission, as the old court model is gradually phased out.

The changes were called for in sweeping reform legislation, Senate Bill 1062, which was passed and signed into law in 2013. The move from a judicial system to an administrative system was made to produce a more

Gov. Fallin Calls on EPA to Reverse Course and Restore Surplus Equip. Program for Rural Firefighters

07/09/2014 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In a [letter](#) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Governor Mary Fallin today criticized the agency for discontinuing a

longstanding program allowing Oklahoma's rural fire departments to repurpose surplus military equipment into fire engines and water tenders.

Oklahoma's rural fire departments are using nearly 9,000 military surplus vehicles and pieces of equipment, valued at more than \$150 million, acquired through the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) and the Firefighter Property Program (FPP).

The EPA and the Pentagon recently discontinued the practice of providing surplus military equipment to rural fire departments, citing the carbon emissions of the vehicles. Fallin said the decision to gut the program for environmental reasons jeopardizes the effectiveness of Oklahoma's firefighting efforts. In her letter, she asked

Education beyond High School is the "New Minimum" for Success in Today's Economy

07/07/2014 01:45 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

Here's a fact: today's economy is more competitive and more complicated than it was fifty years ago. Oklahomans entering the workforce today are not just competing against Texans; they are competing against Americans in all 50 states, and workers in Mexico, India, Europe and China.

Today's jobs require more skills. Fifty years ago you could stand on an assembly line, turn a crank, and expect to be able to provide a middle class life for your family. Those days are over. Today's manufacturing and energy jobs require everything from basic internet and computer skills to knowledge of advanced robotics.

A more global and more specialized economy has created a more competitive job market with less room for unskilled labor. In fact, it has all but eliminated the possibility that a traditional high school diploma can lead to a job that pays a

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Independence Day

07/04/2014 05:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a happy Independence Day:

“We are blessed to live in a country where freedom and liberty are still valued. Because our Founding Fathers courageously rose up to support those principles 238 years ago, we can worship freely, speak our minds and defend our families.

“This holiday, let's not forget to keep in our thoughts and prayers those who have served and currently serve in our nation's military. Their courage, sacrifice and service ensure our rights and liberties are passed along to future generations of Americans.

“I am wishing all Oklahomans a happy and safe Independence Day, while encouraging all of us to bear in mind the sacrifices made by those in the U.S. Armed Forces that have made this celebration possible.”

Gov. Fallin Announces Extension of Insure Oklahoma

06/30/2014 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has been granted a one-year extension for the Insure Oklahoma program.

The program, scheduled to expire at the end of 2014, has been extended through Dec. 31, 2015.

“This is great news for the thousands of adults and children who currently buy health insurance through Insure Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “These Oklahomans and their families can now be assured that they won’t lose their insurance on January 1.”

Insure Oklahoma provides health insurance for almost 19,000 working, low-income Oklahomans. It is funded by the state’s tobacco tax matched with federal dollars. This is the second extension for Insure Oklahoma in less than a year granted by the federal government, which originally considered having the program expire at the beginning of 2014.

Insure Oklahoma also serves approximately 4,280 small businesses, which

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on U.S. Supreme Court Ruling in Hobby Lobby Case

06/30/2014 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the Supreme Court’s ruling in the Hobby Lobby case (read more [here](#)).

“Religious liberty is one of the principles this nation was founded upon. It is a freedom woven into the fabric of this country and expressly outlined in our Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court acted today to protect religious liberty and defend our citizens from an overreaching, overbearing federal government.

“I congratulate Hobby Lobby, a great Oklahoma company, for successfully standing up to the powers that be in Washington and working to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans.”

Gov. Fallin: Fort Sill Facility Housing Illegal Immigrants a Result of Pres. Obama’s Failed Po

06/20/2014 04:45 PM CDT

LAWTON – Governor Mary Fallin today toured a temporary shelter at Fort Sill housing almost 600 unaccompanied minors who crossed the United States’ southern border illegally. The tour was lead by officials with the U.S. Health and Human

Services Administration for Children and Families. Federal officials barred access to the tour for the media and requested no pictures or video be taken.

Following the tour, Fallin criticized President Obama for lax immigration policies that have lead to an illegal immigration crisis.

“This facility at Fort Sill is a testament to President Obama’s failed immigration policies and his lack of seriousness when it comes to border security,” Fallin said. “Over 50,000 unaccompanied minors illegally made their way into the U.S. in the last year. Because of the president’s insistence on amnesty over border security, that number is expected to double. The president’s failed policies are

Governor Mary Fallin Statement Supporting OHLAP College Scholarships

06/13/2014 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued a statement in support of the Oklahoma Higher Access Learning Program (OHLAP), which provides college scholarships to low and middle income students. Fallin responded to confusion about OHLAP and the FY 2015 budget agreement, which reduces money sent to an OHLAP revolving fund by \$7.8 million to allow that money to be used elsewhere in the state budget.

“In order to balance the state’s budget and adequately fund core government services like public education, the Legislature and I agreed to a budget deal that sends \$7.8 million that would otherwise go to OHLAP to other parts of the budget. Historically, monies available for OHLAP scholarships have carried an excess year-end cash balance of over \$18 million after all scholarship obligations have been funded. The \$7.8 million reduction should have no effect whatsoever on the number of college students receiving scholarships or the state’s ability

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Use of Fort Sill as Detention Facility for Illegal Minors

06/06/2014 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after her office was informed by the Regional Administrator of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that Fort Sill is being considered as a location for the housing of up to 1,200 unaccompanied minors who illegally crossed the southern border of the United States.

"The Obama administration today informed the state of Oklahoma that Fort Sill will be housing up to 1,200 unaccompanied minors who came into this country illegally. While they have assured my office this arrangement is temporary, the Obama administration continues to fail in its duty to protect our borders and continues to promote policies that encourage, rather than discourage, illegal immigration. I am dismayed by what appears to be an endless cycle of illegal immigration, temporary housing and eventual amnesty for those who have broken our laws. Today's news is the latest in a long line of policy

Gov. Fallin Signs HB 3399 to Repeal and Replace Common Core Standards

06/05/2014 04:00 PM CDT

New Standards will be developed in Oklahoma and Increase Academic Rigor

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today signed HB 3399, a bill that replaces the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English and math with academic standards to be designed by the state of Oklahoma.

HB 3399 repeals the adoption of CCSS and directs the State Board of Education to create new, more rigorous standards by August 2016. For the first time in state history, the State Regents for Higher Education, the State Board of Career and Technology Education, and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce will be asked to formally evaluate those standards to determine they are “college and career ready.” While those new standards are being written, the state standards for English and math will revert to the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards used from 2003 to 2010.

HB 3399 passed with overwhelming bipartisan

The 2014 Legislative Session: Creating More Opportunities for Oklahoma Families and Businesses

06/02/2014 03:45 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

At the beginning of the 2014 Legislative Session, I asked our lawmakers to work with me to build on the considerable momentum we have helped to create in Oklahoma. That momentum includes:

- Over 90,000 new jobs created since 2011 and a reduction of the unemployment rate from over 7 percent in 2010 to just 4.6 percent today
- Per capita income growth of 6.3 percent from 2011 to 2013, the second-highest growth rate in the nation during that time period and
- The restoration of the Rainy Day fund, which went from broke (\$2.03 in 2011, to be exact) to a high over \$570 million

We have achieved these results through hard work and a commitment to fiscally conservative, pro-growth policies as well as the elimination of government waste. When Washington tried to push

Gov. Fallin Signs Major Pension Reform Bill

05/30/2014 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed a bill that creates a more flexible pension system for future state workers.

House Bill 2630 moves future state employees from a defined benefit plan to the 401k-style, defined contribution plan being widely used in the private sector. The law does not cover employees designated “hazardous duty” – including firefighters and law enforcement officers—or teachers. It does not change the pension system for current employees or retirees.

“This bill allows flexibility for future state employees to take the money they have accrued if they change careers,” said Fallin. “That helps us to make state employment more attractive and aids in recruitment.”

The bill also starts to address the unfunded liability within the debt-burdened system that currently exists.

“Oklahoma pension systems currently have \$11 billion in

State Burn Ban Will Expire Wednesday, June 4

05/29/2014 03:45 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin Urges County Commissioners to Issue Local Burn Bans if Appropriate

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The burn ban issued by Governor Mary Fallin on May 5 covering 36 counties is set to expire this coming Wednesday, June 4. Due to the significant rain fall received in some areas of the state over the last week, the governor does not expect to renew that burn ban for any county. However, many areas of the state remain in conditions of extreme drought (see more [here](#)). County Commissioners in all 77 counties have the authority to declare countywide burn bans should conditions warrant.

"Thankfully, many parts of Oklahoma have received rain over the last several days," Fallin said. "That helps to mitigate the danger of wildfires and is certainly good news for our farmers and ranchers as well as our lakeside communities.

"We must, however, remain vigilant

Gov. Fallin Signs Measure to Repair Crumbling State Capitol

05/29/2014 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin signed into law today a measure that will provide funding to pay for repairing the crumbling state Capitol.

House Joint Resolution 1033 authorizes a \$120 million bond issue to pay for repairs to the nearly 100-year-old building and replace outdated electrical and plumbing systems.

“It’s great that this important symbol of Oklahoma is finally getting the treatment it deserves,” said Fallin. “This bond issue represents a responsible approach to repair the building.

“This is the people’s house, a symbol of our state, and the seat of our government. All Oklahomans have a vested interest in maintaining this building and ensuring it does not continue to fall into disrepair. My thanks go out to our legislators for taking action to restore the Capitol.”

HJR 1033 also requires the formation of the State Capitol Repair Expenditure Oversight Committee,

Gov. Fallin Signs Bill Modifying Gross Production Tax Incentive

05/28/2014 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a permanent, lowered tax rate that will continue a drilling incentive program for oil and natural gas companies operating in Oklahoma.

House Bill 2562 provides an incentive on oil and natural gas production from all new wells drilled after July 1, 2015. Under that incentive, all production from all new wells will be taxed at 2 percent for 36 months. After the first 36 months, a gross production tax rate of 7 percent applies. The initially lower rate is designed to encourage increased drilling and energy production in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce estimates that 25% of all Oklahoma jobs are supported directly or indirectly by the energy industry.

“The energy industry is the leading driver of economic growth and job creation in Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “Approximately one in four Oklahomans have a job and a salary because of

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Thomas 'Pete' Churchwell to the GRDA Board of Directors

05/27/2014 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Thomas 'Pete' Churchwell, of Grove, to the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) board of directors. He is succeeding Betty Kerns, who resigned.

Churchwell will serve the remainder of Kern’s unexpired term ending in August 2015 and will represent economic development interests, lake enthusiasts and property owners.

He is retired from Public Service Co. of Oklahoma (PSO), a unit of American Electric Power, where he served as president and chief operations officer.

“Pete Churchwell has spent his entire career in energy management in both the public and private sector,” Fallin said. “He brings a unique leadership skill-set to the GRDA and will serve this agency well.”

Throughout his career, Churchwell served in a variety of roles including: executive vice president for West Texas Utilities in Abilene, Texas (1993-96);

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on the Upcoming Memorial Day Holiday

05/23/2014 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the Memorial Day Holiday:

“As we celebrate this Memorial Day weekend, I encourage Oklahomans to take a moment to remember and honor those who have fought and died to defend the freedom we continue to enjoy every day.

“Their courage and sacrifice reminds us that freedom comes with a cost, and we are blessed to have so many patriots who are willing to fight and sacrifice for this country and the freedom and liberty it represents.

“I'm wishing Oklahomans a safe and fun Memorial Day weekend. I know they will join me in keeping our former and current military personnel in their thoughts and prayers.”

Gov. Fallin Thanks House of Representatives for Reconsidering School Safety Measure

05/22/2014 08:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the passage of House Joint Resolution 1092 in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. The bill had been defeated earlier in the day, but was reconsidered and passed on Thursday night.

“Because of the extraordinary efforts of Rep. Mark McBride and Rep. Jon Echols, who represent communities in Moore and Oklahoma City that were hard-hit by last year’s storms, HJR 1092 has been revived and is now heading to the Senate for final passage. These legislators have my thanks and appreciation for their work on this bill and their dedication to making Oklahoma schools safer for children and teachers.

“It is now up to the Senate to act on this bill and ensure the people of Oklahoma have a chance to vote on a plan to help put more storm shelters and safe rooms in our schools.”

###

Gov. Fallin Statement Regarding the Legislature's Failure to Pass School Safety Legislation

05/22/2014 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after House Joint Resolution 1092 failed to pass in the Oklahoma House of Representatives:

"A little more than a year ago today, seven children had their lives cut short when Plaza Towers Elementary School was ripped apart by a tornado in Moore. Those children would have been alive today if that school had a safe room.

"House Joint Resolution 1092 would have helped Oklahoma communities build storm shelters and saferooms in their schools. It would have saved lives.

"It failed today because of a politically motivated and intentionally misleading smear campaign. Critics of the bill said HJR 1092 would have raised taxes. It does not. It would have allowed local communities to increase their bonding indebtedness *only if those communities voted to do so*. It is a local control measure that supports decisions made by local

Gov. Fallin Comments on Veto Override of Bill that Rolls Back Literacy Standards

05/21/2014 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the veto override of House Bill 2625:

"I am disappointed today that the Legislature chose to override my veto of HB 2625, a bill which undercuts third-grade literacy standards and returns us to a system that has failed Oklahoma children for decades.

"At issue is this: what is the best way to help the nearly 8,000 third-graders we know are reading at a first-grade level? By overriding my veto, the Legislature has ensured the vast amount of these third-graders will go on to the fourth grade. They have not, however, acted to provide them with the tools they need to succeed. These children will now be asked to do more difficult coursework, and to do so with very limited reading skills.

"My concern continues to be that we are setting these children up for failure. We are asking them to succeed when we have not given

ICYMI: Business Community Applauds Gov. Fallin for Veto of HB 2625

05/21/2014 09:30 AM CDT

The State Chamber of Oklahoma: Governor Made Right Decision to Veto Watered-Down Reading Requirements

Third grade reading requirement is crucial part of improving Oklahoma's education system

Oklahoma City (May 20, 2014) – The State Chamber of Oklahoma commends Governor Mary Fallin for taking a tough stance on keeping education reforms passed by a previous Republican legislature. Her action reaffirms the importance of making sure students can read at grade level in order to be promoted from third grade to fourth grade.

“Learning to read is the most important determination of a child’s future education,” said State Chamber President & CEO Fred Morgan. “If we want students to become proficient in

Gov. Fallin Thanks Legislators for Support of Pension Reform Bill

05/20/2014 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today thanked members of the Oklahoma House of Representatives for passing House Bill 2630, a pension reform bill. The bill moves future state employees from a defined benefit plan to the 401k style, defined contribution plans being widely used in the private sector. The law does not cover employees designated “hazardous duty” – including firefighters and law enforcement officers—or teachers. It does not change the pension system for current employees or retirees.

HB 2630 passed in the House by a vote of 58-33. It now heads to the Oklahoma State Senate.

“Moving to a 401K-style pension model for future hires will make Oklahoma better able to recruit and hire qualified employees for state government by giving them more portable and flexible retirement benefits.

“This bill also helps protect current employees and retirees by making our pension system, which

Gov. Fallin Vetoes Bill Rolling Back Literacy Standards

05/20/2014 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today vetoed House Bill 2625, a bill that rolls back the literacy standards established in the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA). The RSA was first passed in 2011 with the goal of ensuring that every third grade child can read before being promoted to fourth grade.

“The research is clear,” said Fallin. “From kindergarten to third grade, children learn to read. Beginning in the fourth grade, they ‘read to learn.’ Without basic literacy skills, children in the fourth grade fall further and further behind. Those children are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to find good jobs even if they do graduate. Promoting them to fourth grade without the basic tools they need to succeed is not just unwise; it is immoral. We must ensure our children have basic proficiency in reading before the fourth grade.”

Under the RSA, every third grade child must take a standardized test

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Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Anniversary of May Tornadoes

05/20/2014 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the one year anniversary of last year's May tornadoes:

"One year ago today, a devastating tornado took the life of 25 Oklahomans. Unfortunately, that tornado was neither the first nor the last during what was an extremely difficult and tragic month for the people of Oklahoma. We lost 49 lives and 1300 homes to storms during one of the worst stretches of severe weather in the history of our state.

"Today, please join me in remembering and praying for those who lost loved ones as well as those who suffered injuries or lost homes.

"On the one year anniversary of the Moore tornado, I would also like to offer my appreciation to all those who helped in the rescue, recovery and rebuilding of Moore and other communities hit by last year's storms. In the wake of the tornadoes, we witnessed incredible courage, resiliency and generosity. We are

Governor Fallin, House and Senate Leaders Reach Budget Deal

05/16/2014 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Mary Fallin, Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman and House Speaker Jeff Hickman today announced an appropriated state budget agreement for Fiscal Year 2015.

The agreement increases funding for K-12 education by \$80 million and uses targeted spending cuts and a reconciliation of several state agency accounts to close a \$188 million shortfall in funds certified for appropriations. It avoids cuts to priority areas like public safety, higher education and mental health while making necessary spending reductions in other areas of state government.

The \$80 million increase to common education funding for FY 15 adds to the \$74 million in additional K-12 funding added in FY 14, bringing a total of new common education funding to \$154 million in the past two fiscal years.

“We have gone to extraordinary lengths – even with a sluggish revenue year – to add substantial new resources to common education in

Feds Approve SBA Aid for Storm Victims

05/09/2014 04:45 PM CDT

Oklahoma City – Governor Mary Fallin announced today the availability of U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest disaster loans for those impacted by the severe storms and tornado that occurred April 28 in Quapaw.

The SBA disaster declaration covers Ottawa and Craig counties as well as neighboring counties in Kansas and Missouri.

The SBA disaster loans are available for renters, homeowners, business owners and private, non-profits to repair or replace any real estate or personal property damaged by the storm which was not covered by insurance. The loan program is also available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the storm.

A Disaster Loan Outreach Center is now open at the Robert Whitebird Cultural Center at 905 Whitebird Street in Quapaw. SBA officials will be on-hand to assist individuals in completing applications, explain the process and answer questions. The Outreach Center

Gov. Fallin Responds to Legislative Override

05/08/2014 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement after the state Senate approved final legislative action to override her veto of House Bill 2461:

"Last Tuesday I vetoed 15 bills in an attempt to refocus the attention of the Legislature on important issues facing this state that have been left unaddressed. Those issues include: the need to support local communities seeking to build storm shelters in schools; the need to repair our crumbling state Capitol; addressing our unfunded and fiscally unstable pension system; working to reduce the crisis of prescription drug abuse in Oklahoma; and delivering a responsible, balanced budget that funds core areas of government such as education appropriately while delivering targeted pay raises to some state employees.

"Those issues remain unaddressed and time is running out. The Legislature has chosen to override one of my vetoes, which is certainly its legal

Gov. Fallin Declares Statewide Emergency, Issues Burn Ban for 36 Counties

05/05/2014 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for all 77 counties because of wildfires that began Sunday, May 4. The governor also issued an executive proclamation that declares a burn ban for 36 counties.

One person was killed and numerous homes and structures have been destroyed in Logan County since a wildfire began late Sunday afternoon. Additional fires were reported near Altus, Jennings and Keystone Lake in Pawnee County, Seiling, Stillwater and Woodward. Damage assessments are ongoing.

“My thanks go out to the firefighters and first responders who have been battling wildfires in several areas of the state,” said Fallin. “The emergency declaration allows state agencies to acquire resources that can aid in that firefighting effort.”

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local

In Death Penalty Debate, Remember the Victims

05/05/2014 01:15 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

(Warning: this column contains descriptions of a violent crime and is unsuitable for children)

Last week, the state of Oklahoma conducted the lawful execution of Clayton Lockett, a man who was convicted of first degree burglary, assault with a dangerous weapon, kidnapping, robbery by force and fear, forcible oral sodomy, rape and first degree murder.

A timeline released by the Department of Corrections shows what witnesses to the execution knew immediately: the process of death by lethal injection took too long.

To avoid a repeat of last week’s prolonged execution, I have asked Department of Public Safety Commissioner Michael Thompson to conduct a thorough review of the events leading up to Lockett’s death. I have also asked the commissioner to develop a set of updated and improved execution protocols, and Department of Corrections

Gov. Fallin Announces Severe Weather Initiatives for Oklahoma

05/01/2014 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Speaking at a news conference today, Governor Mary Fallin announced several severe weather initiatives the state has been undertaking since last May’s devastating tornado outbreak. The preparedness initiative is designed to keep Oklahomans safe during severe weather season.

The announcement came with the introduction of a set of new public service announcements (PSAs) featuring Governor Fallin, developed to help remind Oklahomans to be prepared for severe weather. The PSAs urge Oklahomans to take

steps now in advance of storms. There are four PSAs for television broadcast and one for radio, which is also offered in Spanish.

Progress on three new programs was also highlighted as part of the news conference, including the formalization of a public/private partnership program. The state has long worked with the private sector during and after disasters, however this program will help to streamline communications between government and

Gov. Fallin Orders Independent Review of Execution Protocols

04/30/2014 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding last night’s execution of Clayton Lockett, the upcoming execution of Charles Warner, and the implementation of an independent review of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections’ execution protocols. The governor also signed an executive order (see attached) authorizing the review, which will be led by Department of Public Safety Commissioner Michael Thompson.

“Last night, the state executed Clayton Lockett. In 1999, Clayton Lockett physically assaulted, kidnapped, and shot Stephanie Neiman, and then had an accomplice bury her alive in a shallow grave. He also repeatedly raped a second woman.

“He was convicted in a fair trial by a jury of his peers. He was then sentenced to death.

He appealed his execution, and that appeal was rejected by both the Oklahoma Supreme Court and the Oklahoma Court of Criminal appeals. He had

Gov. Fallin Issues Stay of Execution, Orders Evaluation of Lethal Dosage Protocol

04/29/2014 08:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin this evening issued a stay of execution for one inmate after prison officials said another inmate’s veins collapsed during an earlier execution procedure.

“I have asked the Department of Corrections to conduct a full review of Oklahoma’s execution procedures to determine what happened and why during this evening’s execution of Clayton Derrell Lockett,” said Fallin. “I have issued an executive order delaying the execution of Charles Frederick Warner for 14 days to allow for that review to be completed.”

Lockett’s execution was halted when it appeared the lethal injection administered to him was ineffective. He remained unconscious and passed away in the execution chamber at 7:06 p.m.

Execution officials said Lockett remained unconscious after the lethal injection drugs were administered.

The governor issued an executive order granting a

Gov. Fallin Signs Tax Cut into Law

04/28/2014 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an income tax cut measure into law. Senate Bill 1246 will gradually lower Oklahoma’s top income tax rate from 5.25 percent to 4.85 percent over several years. The cuts are dependent on revenue triggers, meaning general revenue in Oklahoma must see an increase before the cuts take effect.

“This is a responsible, measured tax cut that will make Oklahoma more economically competitive while providing much needed tax relief to working families,” said Fallin. “If Oklahoma wants to attract and retain good jobs – rather than losing them to neighboring states – we must improve our tax climate. I am proud that the Legislature has taken action to do so and I am happy to sign this bill into law.

“This tax cut will put more than \$200 million annually into the economy and make Oklahoma a better place to do business, meaning more opportunities and jobs for

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency in Ottawa County Due to Tornado

04/28/2014 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a state of emergency for Ottawa County due to a tornado that struck Quapaw on Sunday.

One person was killed in Quapaw and the city’s fire station was destroyed when a tornado struck early Sunday evening. The tornado struck an area from First to Sixth streets, destroying at least five businesses and other structures. Damage assessments are ongoing today.

“Our hearts and prayers are with those who have been affected by Sunday’s tornado,” Fallin said. “The state is prepared to offer every resource available to assist with cleanup, rebuilding and recovery.”

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions. The declaration also marks a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

The declaration

Gov. Fallin Says Oklahoma Preparing for Executions after State Supreme Court Ruling

04/24/2014 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – As a result of the Oklahoma Supreme Court dissolving its stay of execution for two inmates, Governor Mary Fallin said today the state is proceeding with plans to execute both men by lethal injection on Tuesday, April 29.

The Supreme Court ruled last night that the rights of inmates Clayton Derrell Lockett and Charles Frederick Warner were not being violated. The court's ruling means that the executions of the two convicted murderers can proceed.

"This ruling shows that our legal system works," said Fallin. "The defendants had their day in court. The court has made a decision. Two men that do not contest their guilt in heinous murders will now face justice, and the families and friends of their victims will now have closure."

The state Department of Corrections is working on specifics and logistics of how both executions will be carried out Tuesday.

Both inmates challenged their

Gov. Fallin Issues Order Postponing Execution

04/22/2014 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued a stay in this evening's scheduled execution of Clayton Derrell Lockett.

Fallin issued the stay in an executive order to clear up possible confusion arising from an earlier stay issued by the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, which typically has jurisdiction in execution matters, previously denied the stay.

"While I have great respect for the honorable men and women of the Supreme Court, this attempted stay of execution is outside the constitutional authority of that body," said Fallin.

The governor's stay is for seven days, which sets Lockett's execution for April 29.

Fallin is asking the Oklahoma attorney general's office during the next seven days to file appropriate papers with the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals as to how that court would direct her to implement the execution.

The governor's

SBA Denies Governor's Assistance Request for Businesses Affected by Bridge Closure

04/17/2014 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today "expressed disappointment" with the notification from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) that her request was denied for an economic injury declaration for businesses that continue to be impacted by the closure of the James C. Nance Memorial Bridge between Purcell and Lexington.

The governor requested the declaration for Cleveland and McClain counties on April 7. Approval would have allowed business owners in McClain and Cleveland counties to apply for federally subsidized loans.

The SBA denial letter states that the Jan. 31, 2014 bridge closure does not meet the definition of a disaster declaration, which is identified in the Small Business Act as “a sudden event which causes severe damage.”

SBA does not offer an appeal process for the economic injury disaster loan program.

“I am extremely disappointed in SBA’s decision to deny economic injury

Gov. Mary Fallin: President Obama’s Minimum Wage Hike Ignores Economic Reality

04/16/2014 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding her opposition to President Obama’s plan to increase the national minimum wage from \$7.25/hour to \$10.10/hour. Fallin released the statement after signing Senate Bill 1023, a bill that ensures municipalities in Oklahoma cannot mandate a minimum wage higher than the national rate.

“President Obama and the Democratic Party are advocating for an increase in the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10. They believe that on this issue, like on so many others, the government can just mandate prosperity and growth with no consideration of economic reality. Now they are taking that fight to Oklahoma, urging their liberal allies to push for mandatory wage increases.

“President Obama and his Oklahoma surrogates say they want to raise the minimum wage to reduce poverty. They are ignoring the fact that most minimum wage workers are young, single people working part

Governor Mary Fallin Applauds House Panel for Advancing Measures

04/10/2014 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today expressed appreciation to members of the Oklahoma House of Representatives Appropriations and Budget Committee for passing several key measures yesterday evening.

Bills that now await to be taken up by the full House include measures that would provide funding for state Capitol repairs; increase accountability at state charter schools; reduce Oklahoma’s personal income tax rate; provide a pay increase for state troopers; and appropriate funds to complete the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum in Oklahoma City.

“These measures are certainly worthy of further consideration this session,” Fallin said. “I appreciate members of the House Appropriations and Budget Committee working long hours to discuss and act on these bills.”

Key measures that the panel passed include:

- **Senate Bill 232,**

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Extension of Aerospace Engineers Tax Credit

04/09/2014 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a bill extending tax incentives to employers and employees in the aerospace industry. HB 2509 will extend the sunset date on the aerospace engineer employee and employer tax credit and the employer credit for tuition reimbursement until January 1, 2018. It also clarifies the definition of “qualified employee” to address an issue with previous aerospace interns being unable to access the credit once they have received their engineering degree.

“The aerospace engineer tax credit has helped to create hundreds of new, high paying jobs for skilled Oklahomans,” said Fallin. “It’s also played a key role in maintaining Oklahoma’s position as an internationally recognized hub for aerospace business.”

Over 500 aerospace-related companies are located in Oklahoma, providing 144,000 direct and indirect jobs with an average salary of \$56,000. Oklahoma’s

Gov. Fallin Seeks Financial Aid for Businesses Affected by Bridge Closure

04/09/2014 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin is seeking federal assistance for businesses in Lexington and Purcell that have been adversely affected by the closing of a state of Oklahoma bridge that connects the two communities.

Repairs are underway to the James C. Nance Memorial Bridge, which has been closed since Jan. 31. The bridge, which provided a 10-minute trip between Lexington and Purcell, was closed after cracks were found in the beams of the truss system that holds the 76-year-old bridge over the Canadian River.

The bridge’s closure has resulted in a 45-minute one-way trip between Lexington and Purcell to conduct businesses from one community to the other. June 14 is the target date to reopen the bridge.

Fallin is requesting that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) declare an economic injury declaration that would allow business owners in McClain and Cleveland counties to apply for federally subsidized

Gov. Fallin, Former Gov. Jeb Bush Visit OKC School

04/08/2014 04:00 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin, Former Governor Jeb Bush Visit KIPP Reach School in Oklahoma City

KIPP Reach Students and Teachers Showcase Successes

OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush today visited with administrators, teachers and students at the KIPP Reach College Prep School in Oklahoma City. Fallin has been an advocate for ongoing education reform and improvement initiatives in Oklahoma, while Bush serves as the Chairman of the Foundation for Excellence in Education ([ExcellinEd](#)).

The governors held two separate roundtable discussions – one with teachers and administrators and one with students – to discuss successful teaching and learning practices at KIPP Reach.

Founded in 2002, KIPP Reach College Preparatory is a charter middle school putting underserved students on the path to success in

Spring Safety: Getting Ready for Tornado Season

04/07/2014 11:00 AM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

Spring is here, and we can all be thankful for the opportunity to spend more time outdoors and enjoy the beautiful Oklahoma weather. Unfortunately, the changing weather patterns also mean something else: the beginning of tornado season.

Last year's horrible May storms were an unwelcome reminder that Oklahoma's weather can be deadly. They were also a reminder that, as a state, we need to do more to protect ourselves, especially our children, from the danger of tornadoes.

Oklahoma currently has over 1800 schools, about a third of which have safe rooms or tornado shelters. In a state where tornadoes are a common occurrence, that just isn't enough. We need to do more to give our communities the tools they need to make our schools safer for our students and teachers.

Traditionally, all school construction has been proposed, constructed and funded at the local level. That allows

Gov. Fallin Fills Three Judicial Vacancies

04/04/2014 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to fill judicial vacancies in Texas, Comanche and Choctaw counties.

Jon Parsley named Texas County district judge

Jon Parsley has been appointed district judge for Texas County. He succeeds Greg Zigler who retired. Parsley will begin service immediately.

Parsley, of Guymon, has been in private practice since 2003, focusing on oil and gas, real estate and contracts. He also handles civil and criminal cases.

“Jon Parsley is an accomplished attorney who brings with him many years of experience in both civil and criminal defense,” Fallin said. “He will serve the citizens of Texas County well.”

Parsley currently serves on the Oklahoma Bar Association’s (OBA) Professional Responsibilities Commission and as chairman of

Gov. Fallin Thanks Senate Rules Committee for Bipartisan Support of School Shelter/Safety Measure

04/02/2014 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the Oklahoma Senate Committee on Rules for its bipartisan support of a constitutional amendment that would allow Oklahoma school districts to pursue a one-time increase in bonding capacity to fund upgrades such as storm shelters, safe rooms and precautions against intruders. The bill passed 12-3 in the Senate Committee on Rules, with the support of both Republican and Democratic senators.

The measure now goes to the full Senate. The Oklahoma House of Representatives previously voted 65-28 to pass House Joint Resolution 1092.

“My thanks go out to the senators who supported this plan today and worked to advance it,” said Fallin. “I especially appreciate Senator Anthony Sykes for championing this issue in his legislative body.

“This resolution empowers communities to take action to better protect their children from tornadoes and other threats. It is a fiscally

Iowa Governor's Office: Gov. Fallin and Iowa's governor visit bombing memorial donated by Iowans

03/28/2014 05:00 PM CDT

(OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma) – Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad yesterday joined Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin in visiting a grove of trees the people of Iowa donated to the victims of the April 19,1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. This is the first time that Branstad has returned to view the bombing

memorial tree garden since he took part in a dedication ceremony in November 1995.

“After the bombing in Oklahoma City in 1995, the governor’s office worked with Iowa citizens to pay tribute to the victims of this horrific act in Oklahoma,” said Branstad. “We remembered that two years prior to the bombing, Oklahomans graciously donated food and water to Iowans affected by the 1993 floods. I was honored to be able to pay my respects to the victims of the bombing and visit the grove that Iowans so generously donated during a difficult time for Oklahomans.”

The idea for the grove came from

Gov. Fallin Hosts Final NGA Initiative Summit

03/28/2014 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin brought together state teams to discuss her yearlong effort, America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow’s Jobs. She was joined by Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon. The initiative focuses on improving state education and workforce training systems and aligning those systems with the needs of individual state economies.

“Preparing America’s 21st century workforce to keep pace and stay competitive is an issue that not only calls for national attention, it also demands gubernatorial leadership,” Gov. Fallin said. “Developing a highly educated workforce and closing the skills gap in our states is essential to ensuring our children’s futures and strengthening our economies.”

The ‘new minimum’ for economic success is either a two-year or four-year college degree or a relevant

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Lesser Prairie Chicken Being Listed as a Threatened Species

03/27/2014 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s decision to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken as a Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The governor expressed optimism at the unprecedented option included in the decision that allows landowners and industry to receive protections from harming the species by enrolling in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ Range Wide Plan and taking steps to allow for conservation:

“While I had asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to not list the Lesser Prairie Chicken under the ESA, due in large part to Oklahoma’s efforts to develop and implement the Range Wide Plan, I believe we have a unique opportunity to show how a plan based in state management of this species can allow for a quick recovery,” said Fallin. “I appreciate the outstanding work of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to develop a new

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Planned Education Rally

03/27/2014 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the upcoming March 31 education rally to be held at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

"I support more funding for common education and I appreciate teachers, parents and students being engaged on this issue. Last year I signed into law a budget that delivered over \$120 million in new education money, by far the biggest increase in resources to any area of government.

"This year I proposed another increase of \$50 million in K-12 education funding increases, despite a \$190 million budget shortfall that will lead to spending cuts at most agencies.

"Providing adequate funding is vital to increasing educational attainment and student performance in Oklahoma. Equally important are the careful implementation and funding of education reforms focusing on accountability in schools, child literacy, and the creation of more rigorous standards in the

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Common Core Legislation

03/24/2014 11:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on House Bill 3399, which passed out of the Senate Education Committee this morning. The measure would replace the Common Core English and Math standards with new, rigorous standards designed by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. It also protects against federal interference or control by prohibiting the state Board of Education from entering into any contract or agreement with any federal agency or private entity that would cede or limit state control.

"Raising education standards and increasing classroom rigor are essential to ensuring our children are prepared for college or to begin their careers when they graduate from high school," said Fallin. "As we work to raise the bar in our schools, it is essential that higher academic standards are developed and implemented by and for Oklahomans. We have no interest in relinquishing control over

Gov. Fallin Comments on Common Core Legislation

03/21/2014 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on plans by the Oklahoma Senate Education Committee to consider House Bill 3399 on Monday. The measure's intent is to provide for the development and adoption of new English and math standards and assessments while prohibiting the state Board of

Education from entering into any contract or agreement with any federal agency or private entity that would cede or limit state control.

“As a state, we must continue to raise education standards and increase accountability in public schools. Nothing is more important to the long term success of our children, nor as essential to our ability to compete in a competitive global economy that demands a highly skilled, highly educated workforce,” said Fallin.

“As we work to increase classroom rigor and raise the academic bar in our schools, I have been clear that Oklahoma must take the lead in developing and implementing our

Gov. Fallin Thanks House for Bipartisan Support of School Shelter/Safety Measure

03/13/2014 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the state House of Representatives for its bipartisan support of a constitutional amendment that would allow Oklahoma school districts to pursue a one-time increase in bonding capacity to fund upgrades such as storm shelters, safe rooms and precautions against intruders.

The House voted 65-28 to pass House Joint Resolution 1092. The measure now goes to the Senate.

“My thanks go out to House members who voted for this responsible plan to improve safety and security at Oklahoma schools,” said Fallin, who asked lawmakers to pass the amendment in her State of the State Address earlier this year. “This bill empowers communities to take action to better protect their children from tornadoes and other threats. It is a fiscally responsible, realistic plan that I believe will ultimately help to save lives.

“I especially appreciate the efforts of Representatives Mark McBride

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Municipal Government Week

03/10/2014 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on Municipal Government Week, which runs today through Friday:

"As the daughter of two Tecumseh mayors, I have a great appreciation for municipal government employees and the impact they have on the communities they serve. Municipal Government Week is a great time for citizens to recognize and celebrate the work being done in their city or town. It is also an opportunity for people to become more involved in their local government."

During the week, municipalities across the state will share with citizens the work it takes to make a city or town run effectively and efficiently. Some will be hosting mock council meetings for youth as well as other special activities.

Governor Mary Fallin Praises Oklahoma House of Representatives for Tax Cut Measure

03/06/2014 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today praised the Oklahoma House of Representatives for passing a tax cut measure. House Bill 2508 would cut the income tax rate from 5.25 to 5 percent beginning in 2016 provided personal income-tax revenues are equal or greater in fiscal year 2015 than revenues generated in fiscal year 2014.

"The House of Representatives took an important step today towards delivering meaningful, responsible tax relief to Oklahoma families," said Fallin. "Reducing the income tax allows working Oklahomans to keep more of their hard earned money while helping to attract and retain jobs and businesses. It is an important part of our strategy to grow our economy and continue Oklahoma's forward momentum."

HB 2508, which passed the House 57-34, was authored by Representative Earl Sears. It now goes to the Oklahoma Senate.

The Time to Fix the Capitol is Now

03/03/2014 12:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

The Oklahoma Capitol was built in 1917. Since then it has been the People's House - a place where state business is conducted and laws are written and passed. It is also a living museum where school children and other visitors come to learn about the history of their state and the workings of their government. For many who pass through Oklahoma, it is the lasting impression they have of our home.

I am proud of this building. I am proud of the work that has gone into acquiring and preserving the priceless portraits, paintings and murals that showcase our history. When the dome was completed in 2002, I thought the people of Oklahoma finally had the kind of beautiful, functional Capitol building they deserved.

Unfortunately, the Capitol has been allowed to slowly decompose. Scheduled maintenance and repairs have been put off and unfunded for years.

The results have been predictable: the building that should

Gov. Fallin Comments on Consolidation Bill Advancing

02/27/2014 05:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on the House of Representatives Government Modernization Committee passing House Bill 3028, which calls for the consolidation of the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, the Oklahoma Arts Council and the Oklahoma Historical Society into the Oklahoma Department of Tourism, History and Cultural Affairs:

"The Oklahoma Arts Council and the Oklahoma Historical Society make invaluable contributions to tourism, culture and education in Oklahoma. Housing these two agencies as independent entities in the Department of Tourism will enhance, not detract from their missions. Tourism has significant advertising, communications, legal and Internet resources that can be used to support both the Arts Council and the Historical Society. Tourism also can build private and public partnerships to enhance funding. Combining these agencies will save taxpayer dollars while ensuring the resources allocated to

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on State Panel's Support for Capitol Bond Issue

02/27/2014 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement after members of the Long-Range Capital Planning Commission authorized sending to lawmakers a letter supporting a bond issue of up to \$160 million to repair the state Capitol:

"These commissioners are successful business and policy leaders whose experience and credibility further affirm that this project is best addressed through a responsible bond issue. The time is right for a bond: interest rates are low and 41 percent of the state's bond indebtedness will come off the books in 2018. It's the responsibility of those of us in state government to maintain and preserve state buildings and assets. A bond issue is the best, most viable way to restore and repair the crumbling state Capitol."

The nine-member Long-Range Capital Planning Commission is charged with addressing repairs to the Capitol and the long-term management of state buildings and properties. The

Gov. Fallin Comments on Tax Cut Measure

02/27/2014 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement today on the Oklahoma Senate's passage of Senate Bill 1246, which would lower the state's income tax rate to below 5 percent if the state's economy continues to improve:

"An income tax cut is an important way to stimulate the economy, create jobs and help middle class families. I am open to any and all plans, including the measure passed by the Senate today, that responsibly reduce the income tax rate. I am pleased the Legislature is examining several different tax cut proposals and I encourage them to remain committed to passing a tax reduction measure this year."

SB 1246, which passed the Senate 32-10, was authored by Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman. It now goes to the House of Representatives.

Governor Mary Fallin Thanks Senate Panel for Passing Bill That Cracks Down on Doctor Shopping

02/25/2014 08:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today thanked members of the Oklahoma Senate Health and Human Services Committee for passing a bill that would require doctors to check the state’s online prescription monitoring program before prescribing a narcotic.

Committee members voted 8-0 Monday to pass Senate Bill 1821. The measure, authored by Sen. A.J. Griffin, now goes to the full Senate.

“Currently, 81 percent of drug-related deaths in Oklahoma are caused by prescription drugs,” said Fallin. “One survey shows that nearly 8 percent of Oklahomans are abusing prescription painkillers. That is twice the national average, and it is unacceptable. The effects of statistics like these are tragic and when left unaddressed we see broken homes, higher incarceration rates, kids left without parents, poverty, child abuse, neglect and suicide.

“My thanks to Senator A.J. Griffin for her hard work on this legislation and her

The Washington Examiner: Gov. Fallin Says Obama's Keystone Decision Coming in a 'Couple of Months'

02/24/2014 01:45 PM CST

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin said that President Obama informed governors Monday that he would make a final decision on whether to approve the Keystone XL pipeline “in a couple of months.”

Fallin, a Republican, told reporters that she asked the president in a meeting at the White House about his timeline for making a final call on the controversial pipeline that would bring oil from Canada to the Gulf Coast.

The Oklahoma leader said Obama replied that “one way or another, in a couple of months.”

The State Department is now reviewing the project, but a judge last week ruled that a Nebraska law allowing the pipeline to be built in the state was unconstitutional.

Environmentalists are also pressuring the president to block Keystone, but a recent State Department report found that construction of the pipeline would not lead to a significant increase in carbon emissions.

The chief executives, including

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

02/24/2014 10:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has made the following appointments to several higher education boards.

Carl Albert State College Board of Regents

Belva Barber, of Poteau, is a law partner at Barber & Barber Attorneys at Law. She currently serves as a trustee and as the chair of the Carl Albert State College Development Foundation. Barber previously served as an adjunct professor in business law at Carl Albert State College. She received a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and a law degree from the University of Tulsa. She is replacing the late Bill Barber and will serve out his term ending in 2015 pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Eastern Oklahoma State College Board of Regents

Loise Washington, of McAlester, is the owner of Chameleon Clothing Co. She currently serves as chair of Eastern Oklahoma State

[Gov. Fallin calls for increased flexibility for states as governors meet in Washington](#)

02/22/2014 11:00 AM CST

WASHINGTON—Governors from across the nation convened in Washington, D.C., today for the 2014 National Governors Association (NGA) Winter Meeting. The meeting provides governors an opportunity to discuss issues affecting states, share innovative solutions and look for ways to strengthen the state-federal partnership. The meeting also will include sessions with the President, members of his cabinet, business leaders and other experts, as well as several governors-only meetings.

[Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments](#)

02/21/2014 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has made the following appointments to various agencies, boards and commissions.

Environmental Quality Board

Billy Sims, of Mountain View, is president of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association. He previously served on the board of directors at Caddo County Rural Water District Number Three. Sims is being reappointed to the board and will serve a five-year term pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Loretta Turner, of Broken Arrow, is a client service manager at Weston Solutions, an integrated environmental and property redevelopment company. She currently serves as a trustee on the Tulsa Engineering Foundation and as a board member on the Society of American Military Engineers. Turner received a bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma. She is replacing Kerry Sublette, who resigned, and will serve a five-year term pending

Gov. Fallin Commends Oklahoma Senate for Approving Capitol Repairs Bond Measure

02/20/2014 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today praised the Oklahoma Senate for its quick and decisive action in approving Senate Bill 2044, which would authorize a \$160 million bond issue to repair the crumbling state Capitol.

The Senate passed the measure 36-11. It now goes to the House of Representatives.

"Many thanks to the senators who voted to support this measure, which would pay for much-needed repairs to the state Capitol," said Fallin. "It's our responsibility to maintain and preserve our seat of government. A bond issue is the best, most realistic option for restoring the People's House."

Governor Fallin proposed a bond for repairs to the state Capitol in her 2014 executive budget and her State of the State Address that she submitted earlier this month to lawmakers.

SB 2044 is authored by Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman and was carried by Sen. Greg Treat.

Gov. Fallin Congratulates New Senate Minority Leader John Sparks

02/20/2014 12:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the selection of Senator John Sparks as Senate Minority Leader:

"I want to congratulate Senator John Sparks on his new role as minority leader," said Fallin. "Republicans and Democrats alike want to make Oklahoma a stronger, more prosperous state for our citizens to live, work and raise a family. I look forward to working with Senator Sparks in support of that goal."

Gov. Fallin Applauds Oklahoma Senate Passage of Pension Reform Bill

02/19/2014 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the Oklahoma Senate for approving Senate Bill 2120, a pension reform bill. The Senate voted 34-11 to pass the measure. It now goes to the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

SB 2120 moves new state employees from a defined benefit plan to the 401k-style, defined contribution plan being widely used in the private sector. The law does not cover employees designated “hazardous duty” – including firefighters and police officers—or teachers. It does not change the pension system for current employees or retirees.

“Moving new hires to a 401K-style retirement helps us to recruit qualified employees from today’s more mobile workforce,” said Fallin. “The 401k model is a more flexible system that allows employees to take the money they have accrued with them if they change careers.

“Second, and just as important, reforming our pension systems

Gov. Fallin Applauds House Committee for Action on School

02/12/2014 07:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the House Appropriations and Budget Committee for advancing a Constitutional Amendment (HJR 1092) that would allow Oklahoma school districts to pursue a one-time increase in bonding capacity to fund upgrades like storm shelters, safe rooms, and precautions against intruders. Fallin asked lawmakers to pass the amendment in her State of the State Address on February 3 (Read: Governor Mary Fallin Announces Comprehensive Plan to Improve School Safety and Security).

“As the governor and also as a mother, I think about the safety of Oklahoma’s children every day. My thanks go out to the lawmakers who voted today to help provide each school district the tools it needs to protect students and teachers from tornadoes and other threats.”

The action by the House Appropriations committee comes on the heels of major bond issues being approved around the state.

In the

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Parole of Former U.S. Army 1st LT. Michael Behenna

02/12/2014 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the announcement that 1st LT. Michael Behenna, a native of Edmond, Oklahoma, will be released from Fort Leavenworth on March 14. (read more via NewsOk: <http://newsok.com/michael-behenna-wins-parole/article/3932953>)

"I am glad this long ordeal has finally come to an end for Michael Behenna and his family. Michael went to Iraq to serve his nation and to defend liberty both here and abroad. Instead, he found himself mourning the loss of his friends from the inside of a cell.

"I believe the Army acted appropriately and compassionately in offering him parole."

Gov. Fallin Praises Senate Appropriations Committee for Advancing Capitol Repairs Bond Measure

02/12/2014 11:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the Senate Appropriations Committee for quickly advancing Senate Bill 2044, a bond measure that would provide \$160 million to repair the crumbling State Capitol.

“My thanks go out to the lawmakers today who voted to support urgently needed repairs to the State Capitol,” said Fallin. “It is impossible to overstate how desperately the Capitol needs fixing. The facade is crumbling and represents a hazard to employees and visitors. The electrical system is outdated and dangerous, and sewage is literally leaking into our basement. A building that should make Oklahomans proud has become an embarrassment.

“Luckily, the Senate has acted today to pursue a fiscally responsible, commonsense solution. A bond issue would allow us to immediately begin repairs without draining large sums of money from other government priorities, like education and public safety. Furthermore, 41 percent of

Low-Income Propane Users in Oklahoma Getting Help from Governor Mary Fallin’s Directive

02/11/2014 01:30 PM CST

DHS distributes more than \$1 million in assistance to low-income propane users

OKLAHOMA CITY – Nearly 4,000 low-income Oklahomans who use propane as their primary or only source of heat have received financial assistance since Governor Mary Fallin ordered the Department of Human Services (DHS) to give them priority status. (Read: [“Gov. Fallin orders priority status for low-income propane users”](#))

Records show 3,753 low-income Oklahomans who use propane for heating fuel received \$1,033,453 in financial assistance since the governor issued her assistance order.

“High propane prices are really hurting Oklahoma families,” said Fallin. “In some cases, we know that families are choosing not to heat their homes. That can actually be dangerous given how cold it has been. I’m glad to see

Gov. Fallin Thanks Senate Pension Committee for Quick Action on Reform Bill

02/10/2014 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the Senate Pension Committee for quickly advancing Senate Bill 2120, a pension reform bill. The bill moves new state employees from a defined benefit plan to the 401k style, defined contribution plans being widely used in the private sector. The law does not cover employees designated “hazardous duty” – including firefighters and police officers—or teachers. It does not change the pension system for current employees or retirees.

“Moving to the more modern, 401K-style model helps state government to accomplish two important goals,” said Fallin. “First, it helps us to recruit qualified

new hires by providing more flexible, versatile retirement options. Under this bill, state employees looking to change careers would have the option of taking their retirement money with them, rather than being locked into a mid-20th century pension system.

“Second,

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on New House Speaker

02/10/2014 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on newly elected Oklahoma House of Representatives Speaker Jeff Hickman:

“Jeff Hickman is a dedicated leader who has earned the respect of his colleagues,” said Fallin. “I am confident he will be an effective and hardworking speaker of the House. I look forward to working with him in his new role as we continue to pursue commonsense conservative policies that will help create jobs and eliminate government waste.”

Governor Mary Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Lexington/Purcell Bridge Closure

02/07/2014 12:30 PM CST

Timeline for Repair Shortened, Monetary Assistance Available for Communities

LEXINGTON—Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency in Cleveland and McClain Counties due to the closure of the James C. Nance Memorial Bridge separating the cities of Lexington and Purcell. The bridge was closed last week after numerous cracks were found in its supports.

Lexington and Purcell are less than two miles apart. Since the bridge closure, commuters living in one town but working in another have been forced to take detours of roughly 40 miles, dramatically increasing commute times and fuel expenses. Safety concerns have also arisen as ambulances are being forced to take the same detours.

Fallin toured the bridge with local officials today, telling Purcell and Lexington residents that “help is on the way.”

“This bridge is a safety hazard and is at risk of collapse,” said

Editorial: Oklahoma third-grade reading law offers long-term benefits for students

02/06/2014 09:45 AM CST

Published: February 6, 2014

By The Oklahoman Editorial Writers

IN its new Kids Count data snapshot, the Annie E. Casey Foundation says 79 percent of low-income Oklahoma fourth-graders aren't reading proficiently, based on National Assessment of Educational Progress data. The problem isn't limited to the poor. The foundation reports 57 percent of higher-income Oklahoma fourth-graders also aren't proficient in reading.

These findings justify alarm. As the foundation report notes, "If we do not make sure all children gain the needed reading skills to be successful in school, their future educational and economic prospects will be dim, and our economy will lag."

Oklahoma policymakers are aggressively addressing this problem. A state law taking effect this year requires retention of third-grade students who are several years behind in reading proficiency. While

Tulsa World: Fallin Plan an Upbeat, Conservative Vision

02/04/2014 12:30 PM CST

By World's Editorials Writers

We found much to like in Gov. Mary Fallin's State of the State speech Monday.

We agree with Fallin's assessment that the state of the state is strong. While some of that has to do with the luck of commodity prices and geology, Fallin's leadership also deserves due credit.

When she came to office, the state had a \$500 million budget hole and \$2.03 in its "rainy day" fund. Today the state's budget is balanced and the emergency fund has \$530 million in it. Meanwhile, unemployment and tax rates are down.

If Fallin takes some public pride in that turnaround, we say it is deserved.

In her plans for the coming year we are particularly pleased with her evolving attitude toward the Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

The initiative is a proven strategy for saving money on prisons while reducing crime. Fallin signed the Oklahoma version of the

The Lawton Constitution: Shelters: Gov. Fallin's Plan Makes Sense

02/04/2014 10:45 AM CST

By: The Lawton Constitution Editorial Board

Gov. Mary Fallin is backing a good, local-option plan to help improve safety and security at public schools. Legislators should give serious consideration to House Joint Resolution 1092, which contains Fallin's ideas.

The plan would let voters approve a one-time increase in schools' bonded indebtedness capacity, sell debt and add local real estate taxes to build storm shelters

and address other similar issues. Districts in which local patrons see the need and want to proceed should have that option. About 700 of 1,800 school buildings have safe rooms or storm shelters, Fallin said.

As was noted in Monday's Constitution, patrons in several schools in Jackson County are ahead of the state. They either have built an underground classroom facility or a storm shelter or are preparing to build a storm shelter from metal shipping containers, using volunteer

My Priorities for the 2014 Legislative Session

02/03/2014 04:00 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

As February begins, so too does another legislative session in Oklahoma. This year I had the honor of giving my fourth State of the State address, delivering my executive budget and outlining an agenda for forward progress and economic growth.

These are the topics I addressed and the priorities I believe our legislative session should focus on.

Job creation:

Oklahoma's economy has made a dramatic turnaround since the Great Recession. Our pro-growth policies are making a significant contribution to that comeback. Today, the unemployment rate has dropped from 7.2 percent to just 5.4 percent. Oklahoma families have also seen their incomes rise by over 6.3 percent since January 2011. That's 44 percent higher than the national average and second in the nation.

We need to continue to build that forward momentum by pursuing pro-growth policies that help

Gov. Fallin Delivers 2014 State of the State Address

02/03/2014 04:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today delivered her 2014 State of the State address ([click here](#) for complete address) to a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature. In it, Fallin outlined her legislative priorities and agenda for the coming year. The governor focused on job creation, reducing government spending and waste, improving school safety, supporting education, cutting taxes and standing up to federal intrusion and Obamacare.

Governor Fallin also released her FY2015 Executive Budget. Click [here](#) to read the FY 2015 Executive Budget and [here](#) for the Executive Budget-Historical Data book.

The following includes highlights and excerpts from

Gov. Fallin Orders Priority Status for Low-Income Propane Users, Extends Emergency

01/31/2014 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today ordered the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) to give priority status to requests for assistance from families who use propane as their primary or only source of heat.

Fallin issued an executive order ([click here to read the order](#)) instructing DHS to expedite applications for both the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Energy Crisis Assistance Program. The federal assistance programs help low-income families with heating costs in the winter, cooling costs in the summer and home insulation.

“I want to make sure we are making assistance available to Oklahomans who are struggling to keep warm because of the high propane prices,” Fallin said. “Many Oklahoma residents depend on the use of propane for survival during the winter

Gov. Fallin Calls on President Obama to Approve Keystone XL Pipeline

01/31/2014 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin called on the Obama Administration today to stop dragging its heels and immediately approve the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. Her renewed call to complete the project came after a State Department study reported the pipeline would have little or no affect on global oil consumption or climate change.

The Keystone XL pipeline connects oil reserves in Canada to markets throughout the United States, ending in the Gulf Coast. The pipeline runs through Cushing, Oklahoma.

“The Keystone pipeline project is important to our nation’s energy security as well as the individual economies of our states,” said Fallin. “In Oklahoma alone, the pipeline

represents a billion dollar investment with the potential to create thousands of jobs. We've waited long enough for this to be approved. It's time for President Obama to

Governor Fallin Calls on President Obama to Approve Keystone XL Pipeline

01/31/2014 03:45 PM CST

New State Department Study Counters Arguments from Obstructionists

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin called on the Obama Administration today to stop dragging its heels and immediately approve the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. Her renewed call to complete the project came after a State Department study reported the pipeline would have little or no affect on global oil consumption or climate change.

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“The Keystone pipeline project is important to our nation’s energy security as well as the individual economies of our states,” said Fallin. “In Oklahoma alone, the pipeline represents a billion dollar investment with the potential to create thousands of jobs. We’ve waited long enough for this to be

Federal Government Approves Oklahoma’s Request for Winter Storm Aid

01/30/2014 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today the federal government has approved the state’s request for federal aid related to the December 5-6 winter storm.

The declaration delivers public assistance to municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state for eligible infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm.

The counties included in this declaration are Choctaw, Le Flore, McCurtain and Pushmataha.

According to preliminary damage assessments, the storm produced an estimated \$6.5 million in infrastructure damage and response costs.

The storm resulted in extended power outages for more than 10,000 homes and businesses as well as treacherous travel conditions. The storm also is blamed for 10 deaths and more than 800 injuries.

Other counties may be added to the declaration should additional damages be identified.

Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission Launches Official Website

01/30/2014 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission announced today that its official website is operational and ready for public use.

“I am excited about the launch of the new commission website,” Commissioner Denise Engle said. “I believe that it serves as a vital link to educate Oklahomans accessing the new administrative workers' compensation system.”

The website is designed to inform and assist claimants, business leaders and industry professionals ahead of the agency's statutorily mandated Feb. 1, 2014, start date. The website also contains links to other relevant information.

The website is www.wcc.ok.gov.

“The commission website is a great resource for Oklahomans, enabling them with necessary forms and information to navigate

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Comprehensive Plan to Improve School Safety and Security

01/29/2014 12:15 PM CST

Constitutional Amendment Allows Every School District to Build Safe Rooms or Pursue other Safety and Security Needs

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced her support of a comprehensive plan to improve school safety and security. At today's Associated Press Legislative Forum, Fallin asked legislators to pass House Joint Resolution 1092, a Constitutional Amendment allowing every school district to pursue a one-time increase in bonding capacity to fund upgrades like storm shelters, safe rooms, and precautions against active shooters.

“I am the governor of this state, and I am also a mother,” said Fallin. “Nothing is more important to me than the safety of our children. I'm asking lawmakers in both parties to work with me this session to support a Constitutional Amendment giving each school district the tools it needs to protect young Oklahomans from tornadoes, shooters, and other

Gov. Fallin Statement on New Academic Standards for English and Math

01/28/2014 06:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued this statement on the Oklahoma State Board of Education’s approval of new state academic standards for English language arts and mathematics:

“I want to thank the thousands of Oklahomans, especially our state’s educators, who took part in the development of the Oklahoma Academic Standards. I sincerely commend all involved for their commitment to providing standards written by Oklahomans for Oklahoma’s students. I look forward to thoughtfully reviewing the Oklahoma Academic Standards and working with the Legislature to approve high quality, college- and career-ready standards to use in our schools. We have the responsibility and obligation to give teachers and students the tools they need for a quality education.”

The standards will be sent to the state Legislature for further review.

Gov. Fallin Sets Special Election for Oklahoma Senate District 5 Seat

01/28/2014 01:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today set special election dates to fill the remaining two years of the state Senate District 5 seat.

Sen. Jerry Ellis, D-Valliant, cannot serve the remaining two years of his four-year term because of 12-year legislative term limits. Ellis was first elected to his Senate seat in 2008 after serving six years in the House of Representatives. Senate District 5 covers Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha counties and parts of Atoka and LeFlore counties.

The special election will be held on the same dates as Oklahoma’s regularly scheduled elections. The primary will be June 24; a potential runoff election would be held Aug. 26; and the general election will be Nov. 4. The filing period is April 9-11. For more information, go to the Oklahoma Election Board’s website, www.elections.ok.gov.

Gov. Fallin Urges Water Conservation as Drought Continues to Affect Oklahoma Lakes and Reservoirs

01/24/2014 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Dry conditions continue to persist across Oklahoma with over 64% of the state in drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. These drought conditions continue to impact water availability throughout the state, particularly in Southwest Oklahoma where sustained, exceptionally dry conditions have lead to record low lake levels in the Red River System. Governor Mary Fallin continues to

encourage all Oklahomans to implement water conservation practices to ensure future water availability and protect the state's water resources.

"Low water levels due to drought are having serious effects on our economy, and are particularly harmful to communities that rely on Oklahoma lakes for tourism and recreation," said Fallin. "Industries as diverse as tourism, agriculture and energy are all directly affected by the state's water supply.

"It's important that the state government, municipalities and

Oklahoma launches 20%x2020 energy savings program

01/22/2014 02:45 PM CST

Law sets goal to reduce state agency energy use 20% by 2020

OKLAHOMA CITY – The State of Oklahoma has launched 20%x2020, a statewide energy savings program that seeks to reduce energy use in state agency buildings by 20 percent by 2020.

20%x2020 is the first program of its scope in any state government. It was conceived by Gov. Mary Fallin, who signed legislation in 2012 creating the initiative, and the Legislature as a way to lower government utility costs in order to reduce overall state spending and free up resources for core government services.

"State government has a lot of room to be more responsible with its energy usage," Fallin said. "Every dollar saved on energy costs is a dollar better used back in the hands of taxpayers or by core government services. We believe this is the most ambitious behavior-based energy savings program any state government has undertaken,

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Bill Burgess, Jr. to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents

01/22/2014 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has appointed Bill Burgess, Jr., of Lawton, to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents.

Burgess is the chairman of the board at Vortex, an investment corporation; publisher of the *Lawton Constitution*; and is a senior partner of Burgess & Hightower Law Firm. He currently serves as civilian aide to the secretary of the Army, as chairman of the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, as a trustee for the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, and vice chair of the Oklahoma Heritage Association.

"Bill Burgess is a long-time public servant who brings a unique skill set to the board," Fallin said. "As a successful businessman and a former regent, he knows what it takes for students to succeed in today's competitive economy. Bill is going to work hard to ensure OU students are getting the great education they deserve and expect."

Burgess

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

01/21/2014 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has made the following appointments to the Oklahoma Accountancy Board, University Hospitals Authority, Environmental Quality Board, and Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. All of the appointments require confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Oklahoma Accountancy Board

Marc Delametter, of Tulsa, is a certified public accountant and is the vice president of QuikTrip. He has been with the company for 27 years holding various positions including: corporate tax manager, general accounting manager, assistant controller and controller. Delametter is a member of the Financial Accounting Standards Advisory Council and the Oklahoma Society of Certified Public Accountants. He serves as a board member and treasurer at Tulsa Tough and Oktoberfest Tulsa. Delametter also serves on the advisory council for the Tulsa University Conference of Accountants. He received a bachelor's degree from

State of Oklahoma Requests Majors Disaster Declaration for December Winter Storm

01/17/2014 05:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the State of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government related to the Dec. 5-12 winter storm.

If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties, rural electric cooperatives and the state with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm.

Counties included in the request are Choctaw, Le Flore, McCurtain and Pushmataha.

According to preliminary damage assessments, the storm resulted in an estimated \$6.5 million in infrastructure damage and response costs.

“Cities, towns and counties in that area especially need federal assistance to help with some of the expense of infrastructure repairs and costs associated with their response to last month's winter storm,” Fallin said.

The storm resulted in extended power outages for more than 10,000

Governor Mary Fallin Applauds Selection of New Oklahoma Prison System Director

01/17/2014 12:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today commended the Oklahoma Board of Corrections for hiring Robert C. Patton to head the state’s prison system.

Patton has served the past four years as division director for the Arizona DOC. He has 28 years of experience in corrections, rising from the ranks of an entry-level corrections officer to division director. He has a master’s degree in public administration from Northern Arizona University.

“Robert C. Patton is an experienced and skilled manager,” Fallin said. “He knows how to run an agency and manage a large budget. Most importantly, he is dedicated to keeping his prisons safe for both guards and inmates.”

Fallin said that Patton shared her commitment to being both “tough on crime” and “smart on crime.”

“Violent criminals who present a danger to society deserve to be in prison,” Fallin said. “We aren’t

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Dr. Tom Coburn’s Announced Retirement from the U.S. Senate

01/17/2014 10:00 AM CST

Special Election to be Held

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the announced retirement of Senator Tom Coburn:

“Doctor Tom Coburn has represented the ‘Gold Standard’ for smart and tough fiscal conservatism since he began serving in the United States Congress in 1995. He is a true hero of the American Taxpayer and one of the most influential voices in American politics today.

“His consistent, relentless advocacy for responsible spending and deficit reduction has earned him respect from men and women on both sides of the aisle. Agree with him or not, there is never any doubt where Tom Coburn stands on the issues. He is as impressive a public servant as they come, and I am sure we have not heard the last from him. While I am sorry to see the Senate lose one of this country’s great statesmen, I am happy that Tom can now spend more time with his

The New York Times: Governors Criticize Gridlock in Congress

01/16/2014 09:00 AM CST

By Rick Lyman

WASHINGTON — The nation’s governors criticized Congress on Wednesday for the political gridlock that they said had stymied passage of almost every federal initiative most needed by the states, and reiterated their calls for help from Washington.

“We are now midway through the 113th Congress, and governors are frustrated,” said Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, a Republican and chairwoman of the [National Governors Association](#), as she delivered the group’s second State of the States address.

“Despite the recent budget agreement, partisan gridlock continues to prevent long-term policy solutions,” Ms. Fallin said. “We’re doing our part as governors to create jobs and address the challenges facing our states and this country. But we also believe that now it’s time

Gov. Mary Fallin Delivers NGA State of the States Address

01/15/2014 11:15 AM CST

Speech Highlights Governors’ Ability to Lead Despite Inaction in Washington

WASHINGTON—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair **Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin** and Vice Chair **Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper** today delivered the association’s second annual State of the States address at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Both governors highlighted state policy innovations and the need for states to fill the voids left by federal inaction and budget cuts, contrasting the productive activity in state capitols with the gridlock in Washington, D.C. **Gov. Fallin** pointed out several areas in which governors have urged Congress to take action and work with states. These areas include reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Water Resources Development Act, restoration of the Workforce Investment Act 15 percent set-aside

Gov. Fallin Issues Statement on Marriage Ruling

01/14/2014 06:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released this statement today on U.S. Senior District Judge Terence Kern’s ruling that Oklahoma’s legal definition of marriage is unconstitutional:

"In 2004, the people of Oklahoma voted to amend the state's constitution to define marriage as ‘the union of one man and one woman.’ That amendment passed with 75 percent support.

“The people of Oklahoma have spoken on this issue. I support the right of Oklahoma's voters to govern themselves on this and other policy matters. I am disappointed in the judge's ruling and troubled that the will of the people has once again been ignored by the federal government."

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Nikki Leach Associate District Judge of Noble County

01/13/2014 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has announced the appointment of Nikki Leach as associate district judge for Noble County.

He is replacing Judge Dan Allen who resigned. His appointment is effective immediately.

Leach, of Perry, has been in private practice since 1985.

“Nikki Leach will serve the residents of Noble County well,” Fallin said. “He is very intelligent and has an exceptional knowledge of the law.”

Leach, a native

Governor Mary Fallin Issues Executive Order on Propane Shortage

01/07/2014 04:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued an [executive order](#) today declaring a state of emergency to deal with a depleted supply of propane available in Oklahoma.

The order waives licensing requirements for eligible out-of-state propane transporters so they can bring the fuel into Oklahoma because of a temporary shortage of the fuel throughout the state.

It also allows truck drivers to exceed the number of hours and consecutive days they can transport propane in Oklahoma.

Extreme winter

Governor Mary Fallin's Native American Liaison Issues First Annual Report

01/07/2014 02:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin's liaison with Oklahoma's American Indian tribes worked on measures this past year that expand the authority of tribal law enforcement officers under state law and improve communication between tribal and state officials on child welfare cases.

The accomplishments are listed in an annual report on 2013 activities that was presented last week to the governor by Native American Liaison Jacque Secondine Hensley. It was delivered to tribal leaders today as well as to members of the Oklahoma Legislature's Native American caucus.

It is Hensley's first report submitted to the governor. A copy of the report can be

Get 2014 off to a Healthy Start

01/06/2014 02:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

With the holiday season behind us, it is a good time to refocus our lives and reevaluate our goals. At the beginning of every year one of the top resolutions for many people is to lose weight, get in shape and live healthier lives.

Change can be difficult and at times seem nearly impossible, but committing to change is important for the sake of our families, our longevity and for our wallets. Bad habits can contribute to a shorter life expectancy and can needlessly drive up the cost of medical bills and health care for everyone.

The good news is – Oklahomans have begun to take notice and we are starting to see the needle move in the right direction, and our citizens are becoming healthier.

Looking back at last year we made major strides in improving our overall health as a state. Smoking rates of adults decreased from 26 percent to 23 percent; at the Capitol we opened our new fitness

Gov. Fallin New Year's Day Message

01/01/2014 06:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a safe and prosperous 2014 and New Year's Day holiday:

"The new year traditionally represents a new beginning and allows us to reflect on all that we have accomplished and what we have to look forward to in the coming months.

"It has been an honor and privilege to continue to serve as governor of the state of Oklahoma. I look forward to keeping our momentum going into 2014 and beyond.

"I want to encourage everyone celebrating the holiday to practice responsible habits and to be safe.

"I also want to wish Oklahomans everywhere peace, prosperity and good health as we enter 2014."

Governors Fallin, Nixon Make Friendly Wager on Cotton Bowl Game between OSU and Missouri

12/31/2013 02:30 PM CST

Proceeds from wager to benefit Oklahoma or Missouri food bank

OKLAHOMA CITY- Gov. Mary Fallin has made a friendly wager with Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon on the outcome of Friday night's Cotton Bowl game between their respective alma maters, the Oklahoma State University Cowboys (#13 BCS ranking) and the University of Missouri Tigers (#8).

Both governors are wagering food products from their states, with the food to be donated to a food bank or pantry in the state of the winning team. Gov. Fallin is wagering a food basket with about 50 pounds of products donated by the Made in Oklahoma Coalition. Gov. Nixon is staking a spiral sliced city ham (with homemade honey ham glaze) and a smoked turkey, delicacies from Burgers' Smokehouse in California, Mo.

A victory by the Cowboys means the ham and turkey will be donated to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. In the unlikely event that Tigers prevail, the food basket from

Arbitration Panel Rules in Favor of Oklahoma

12/27/2013 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – A three-member arbitration panel handed down opinions today favorable to the state of Oklahoma involving disputes with two American Indian tribes over tobacco compacts.

Both rulings were unanimous in cases involving the Absentee-Shawnee Tribe and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

The decisions put both tribes on non-compact status for retail tobacco sales, said Steve Mullins, general counsel for Gov. Mary Fallin.

Without a compact agreement with the state, the Absentee-Shawnee and Wichita tribal retailers will be issued black stamps, which allow a limited number of tobacco products to be sold tax free but only to tribal citizens. For all other tobacco sales, they will be obligated to pay the full tax rate.

"I am still committed to negotiating in good faith with both tribes on terms for new tobacco compacts," said Gov. Mary Fallin. "I look forward to the opportunity to engage in these

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointments to Science and Technology Council

12/26/2013 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today named four new members to the Governor's Science and Technology Council. Each member will fill a vacancy on the council.

The 18-person council is chaired by Oklahoma Secretary of Science and Technology Stephen McKeever. It works to identify opportunities for the growth of science and technology industries in Oklahoma.

The new members are listed below:

Brenda Rolls, of Stillwater, is president and chief executive officer of Frontier Electronic Systems Corp., a technology based company that designs and develops electronic equipment. She received a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and a master's and doctorate from Biola University in LaMirada, California. Rolls is replacing Web Keogh.

Robin Schott, of Edmond, who is vice president of Project Lead the Way, a provider of rigorous and innovative Science, Technology,

Gov. Fallin Christmas Statement

12/25/2013 07:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement wishing Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and happy holiday season:

“Christmas is a time to celebrate and be thankful for the blessings bestowed on us by God

Gov. Fallin Signs E-Cigarette Ban on State Property

12/23/2013 02:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin signed [an executive order](#) Monday that prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes (sometimes referred to as “vaping”) on all state-owned and leased properties effective Jan. 1, 2014.

The governor's action comes nearly two years after she signed a similar order banning the use of tobacco products. Lawmakers earlier this year passed legislation making the smoking prohibition permanent.

The new ban on e-cigarettes prohibits their use on all state-owned and leased properties and in state-owned and leased buildings and vehicles.

The governor said the prohibitions on e-cigarettes and the earlier prohibitions on other tobacco products protect the health of employees and people visiting state-owned properties.

Fallin said recent popularity of

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointments

12/23/2013 12:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced the following appointments to various boards and commissions.

Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission

Bruce Mabry, of Okmulgee, is the president and chief executive officer of Citizens Security Bank in Okmulgee. He was first appointed to the commission in 2002. Mabry's reappointment will require him to serve an eight year term beginning in July 2014, representing District 2. He received a bachelor's degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Senate confirmation is required for his appointment.

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Dean Graumann, of Granite, is the owner/operator of Graumann Farms. He currently serves as the president of the Southern Plains Agricultural Resources Coalition and the vice

Tulsa World: Macy's to Open Facility in Tulsa Area

12/17/2013 03:30 PM CST

By RHETT MORGAN World Staff Writer

National retailer Macy's Inc. will open a distribution center that will provide 1,500 full- and part-time jobs near Cherokee Industrial Park.

Gov. Mary Fallin made the announcement during a news conference today in downtown Tulsa.

The center -- known as a "fulfillment center" is expected to have an \$800 million economic impact over 10 years, officials said. Macy's Inc. will make a \$170 million investment in the facility, which is expected to be 1.3 million square feet.

In addition to the 1,500 jobs, Macy's could hire an additional 1,000 temporary seasonal employees.

The company looked

Governor Mary Fallin Announces 1500 Jobs Coming to Tulsa County

12/17/2013 02:15 PM CST

Macy's Inc to Build Major New Fulfillment Center

TULSA – Governor Mary Fallin today joined representatives from Macy's, Inc., local officials and members of the Tulsa Regional Chamber for a major job-creation announcement in Northeast Oklahoma. Macy's, Inc. today announced it will build a major new direct-to-consumer fulfillment center near Owasso in Tulsa County. The site is located strategically near the intersection of 76th Street North and Lakewood Avenue, about 12 miles north of Tulsa. The company is expected to invest more than \$170 million in the facility, including the latest technology in material handling equipment and warehouse management systems.

Construction of the 1.3 million-square-foot facility is expected to begin in spring 2014, with operations starting in April

The Oklahoman: Official Says Combining Energy, Environment Offices Have Been Successful

12/16/2013 04:00 PM CST

By Adam Wilmoth

After three months on the job, Oklahoma Energy and Environment Secretary Michael Teague said combining the two offices has been positive for the state.

"It's been a huge advantage," Teague said Friday. "Just the idea you have one office to sort through and take on these issues and one office that's the point of contact with our federal agency counterparts, that's a huge advantage."

Teague spoke Friday at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Oil and Gas Association, which until Thursday was known as the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association of Oklahoma.

Gov. Mary Fallin appointed Teague as secretary of the combined energy and environment office in August, after both Energy Secretary Mike Ming and Environment Secretary Gary Sherrer stepped down earlier in the year.

Teague said he has spent much of the past three months touring the state, visiting drilling

Gov. Fallin Appoints Patrick Pickerill Associate Dist. Judge of Pawnee County

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Patrick Pickerill as associate district judge for Pawnee County. He is replacing Judge Matthew Henry who resigned. Pickerill will begin service immediately.

Pickerill, of Cleveland, has been in private practice since 1995 with Pickerill Law Offices, a general practice law firm that focuses on wrongful death cases, trusts and real estate. He also has served as municipal judge for Oilton and city attorney for Jennings.

“Patrick Pickerill has established himself as a skilled attorney who has a wealth of experience in both civil and criminal litigation,” Fallin said. “Given his knowledge and experience, I know he will serve the residents of Pawnee County well.”

Pickerill has served the past eight years as president of the Pawnee County Bar Association. He also is a member of the Osage Nation Bar Association.

In 2005, Pickerill was named

[The Oklahoman: Oklahoma Earns Accolades for Complete College America Program](#)

12/06/2013 03:45 PM CST

By [Kathryn McNutt](#) • Published: December 5, 2013

Oklahoma's Complete College America program is gaining national attention from both education and business leaders.

The state will be recognized Dec. 11 at the White House for its remediation education efforts and was praised by Business Roundtable — an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies — for its performance funding model in a letter dated Nov. 26.

Members of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education heard about the accolades Wednesday during their meeting in Oklahoma City.

“Performance funding is our strongest area (of Complete College America),” said Tony Hutchison, vice chancellor for workforce and economic development for the regents.

Established in 2009, Complete College America is a national nonprofit that works with 34 participating states to

[Gov. Fallin Comments on Death of Former State Labor Commissioner Brenda Reneau](#)

12/06/2013 09:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Statement of Gov. Mary Fallin on the passing of former Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Brenda Reneau:

I am saddened to hear of Brenda's passing. During her tenure as labor commissioner, she improved the Oklahoma Labor Department's relationship with the business community. She will be remembered for her efforts to reduce workplace injuries through her "Safety Pays" program, which provided small- and medium-size companies free consultations on workplace safety and federal regulations. We developed a special camaraderie as we were both female Republicans serving statewide elected positions during the same 12-year time period in a Capitol populated heavily with Democrats. We both were the first women in Oklahoma to be elected to our respective offices – she as labor commissioner and me as lieutenant governor. My prayers and deepest sympathies go out to her family and friends during this time of

Governor Mary Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Winter Storms

12/05/2013 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to the winter storm impacting the state.

Because the weather event is expected to include prolonged sub-freezing temperatures, dangerous road conditions and power outages, emergency management authorities recommended issuing this declaration before the full brunt of the storm arrives.

Governor Fallin warned Oklahomans to stay off the roads if at all possible.

"The weather is bad and getting worse," said Fallin. "Emergency personnel are coordinating with state and local officials to ensure we are prepared and ready for whatever comes our way."

Fallin's Executive Order allows state agencies to make emergency purchases related to disaster relief and preparedness. It is also a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

In preparation for the storm, the State

Tulsa World: Governor Mary Fallin Issues Order Barring Feds from State's Academic Standards

12/05/2013 01:30 PM CST

By Kim Archer

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Gov. Mary Fallin Wednesday issued an executive order directing the state Secretary of Education to monitor and ensure that the federal

government does not intrude in Oklahoma's development of academic curricula and teaching strategies.

In the order, she said that the federal government will have no input in the formulation of the Oklahoma Academic Standards or the assessments used to determine student performance.

She said the state will be "exclusively responsible" for deciding the assessment methodology to be used to measure student performance and that local districts may "at their own discretion" adopt additional supplementary assessments to measure educational progress.

The order also specifies that all state agencies "will aggressively oppose any future attempt by the federal government to force the state to adopt standards that do not reflect Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Names Tulsa Banker to Corrections Board

12/04/2013 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Frank X. “Frazier” Henke IV to serve on the state Board of Corrections.

Henke, president and chief executive officer of American Bank and Trust Co. in Tulsa, will serve with full membership powers on an interim basis pending state Senate confirmation. He was named to fill an unexpired term that ends March 15, 2019.

Henke is serving as a Republican from the 1st Congressional District. He replaces Hastings Siegfried who resigned.

“Frazier is an excellent manager who will help to ensure our prisons are well run and safe,” said Fallin. “His banking and fiscal expertise will also be great assets to the Corrections Department as it works to allocate its resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible.”

A fourth-generation Tulsan, Henke earned his bachelor's degree in political science at Northwestern University in

Gov. Fallin Issues Executive Order Regarding the Adoption of More Rigorous Academic Standards

12/04/2013 11:30 AM CST

Order Prevents Federal Overreach and Protects Student Privacy

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an executive order explaining how the state of Oklahoma is adopting more rigorous academic standards in English and Math in its public schools. It also makes it clear that the new standards are to be developed and implemented locally. Fallin’s order contains protections against federal intrusion in the development of academic curricula and

teaching strategies. It also includes prohibitions on actions that might violate the privacy rights of students.

The adoption of more rigorous academic standards was authorized by the Oklahoma Legislature in 2010. These new standards are currently being implemented in Oklahoma's K-12 public schools. They place a greater emphasis on critical thinking, rather than memorization, and are designed to better prepare children for post-secondary education or

Gov. Fallin to Light State Capitol Christmas Tree

12/03/2013 07:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will take part in this evening's annual Christmas tree lighting on the south steps of the Oklahoma Capitol. The 30-foot-tall artificial tree, adorned with nearly 2,000 energy-saving LED lights, is to be lit at about 6:15 tonight.

The tree-lighting ceremony is part of an annual event that hosts an afternoon of festivities including elementary, middle and high school students from across the state decorating Christmas trees at various locations in the Capitol building and performing arts groups singing Christmas carols and performing dance routines.

"This is a very special time of the year to celebrate the holiday season with family and friends with the annual lighting of the Capitol's Christmas tree and caroling," Governor Fallin said. "I appreciate all of the students and schools from across the state that came up to help decorate the numerous Christmas trees on

The Oklahoman: Gov. Fallin's Indian child welfare order wins praise

12/03/2013 10:30 AM CST

By Graham Lee Brewer | Published: Dec. 2, 2013

When Christi Gonzalez tried to gain custody of her nephew, the lines of communication between the American Indian tribe her nephew belongs to and the state Department of Human Services weren't open enough, she said.

Gonzalez said DHS workers were unaware of how to handle the situation and would often refer her to the tribe, saying they should take care of the problem internally.

"But yet, we really needed outside sources to help us find the right avenues to take," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, the Indian child welfare social services director for the Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma, is now lauding an executive order issued recently by Gov. Mary Fallin. The order is intended to open the lines of communication between tribes and DHS to help better resolve child welfare cases.

The order, issued Nov. 12, allows DHS and tribal workers to openly share information

This Holiday Season, Celebrating an Inspiring Year in Oklahoma

12/02/2013 12:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

Thanksgiving has come and gone and Christmas is on its way. This is a great time of year to reflect on all of God's blessings and to be thankful for what we have.

Like many Oklahomans, I am thankful for my faith, my wonderful family, and my friends. I am also thankful for the opportunity to be your governor.

Oklahoma is a special state. We are a community of generous and caring individuals. I am thankful for that sense of community, and for the Oklahoma Standard which it represents.

It was that sense of resilience and compassion that allowed us to recover and rebuild so quickly in the wake of the May tornadoes. The tragedy of those storms was devastating; but the volunteer spirit, the fearlessness of our first responders, and the generosity of our people was inspiring. Today, organizations like the OKStrong Disaster Relief Fund run by the United Way have raised millions of dollars for

Gov Fallin Thanksgiving Statement

11/27/2013 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following Thanksgiving Day statement:

“This Thanksgiving, I will take a moment to reflect on all of God's blessings. I am most thankful for my faith, my family, my friends, and the opportunity to continue to make a difference in the lives of so many Oklahomans through my service as governor.

“I am also grateful we live in a free nation. My thanks go out to all our men and women in the military, who continue to protect freedom at home and abroad.

“Finally, as we prepare to celebrate another Thanksgiving, I would like to wish all Oklahomans a safe, happy and blessed holiday.”

Gov. Fallin Statement of the Passing of Former State Rep. Forrest Claunch

11/20/2013 05:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the passing of former state Representative Forrest Claunch:

“Representative Forrest Claunch took seriously his duty to the state and was a conscientious and principled lawmaker who left no doubt where he stood on the issues. He will be missed. Please join me in keeping his family and friends in our

prayers.”

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Obamacare Enrollment

11/13/2013 09:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after the White House revealed that only 346 Oklahomans have selected a health insurance plan through the federal insurance marketplace:

“It is embarrassing that the Obama Administration cannot produce a functional website, especially when so many individuals are relying on that site to purchase health insurance for themselves or their families.

“Virtually everything this White House has told the American people about Obamacare has proven to be false. The president said the law would lower the cost of health insurance, but we know that state employees in Oklahoma are seeing their premiums rise by as much as 12 percent. He said if you liked your health insurance plan you could keep it. We now know for millions of Americans that has proven to be untrue.

“Many of the people who are losing coverage are sick. In Oklahoma, for example, there are over 800

Gov. Fallin Comments on Death of Senator Inhofe's Son

11/12/2013 04:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today, after confirmation by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner that the victim of Sunday’s airplane crash was Dr. Perry Inhofe, son of U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe:

“My heart is broken for Senator Jim Inhofe and his wife, Kay, along with Perry's family. This is such a sudden and tragic loss of an outstanding, talented man. My thoughts and prayers are with the Inhofe family during this very difficult time.”

Gov. Fallin Statement on US Airways, American Airlines Merger

11/12/2013 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the Justice Department’s agreement to allow US Airways and American Airlines to merge:

“The decision to allow American Airlines and US Airways to merge is great news for the thousands of employees at these two companies, many of whom work in Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “I’m particularly thrilled for the 6,000 AA employees in Tulsa who stand to benefit from this agreement. We know that the state of Oklahoma

will continue to be a great place for these employees to call home, and an ever-growing hub for the aerospace and aviation industries.”

Veterans Day Message from Oklahoma's Secretary of Veterans Affairs

11/11/2013 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Secretary of Veterans Affairs Rita Aragon, who serves on Gov. Mary Fallin’s Cabinet, released the following Veterans Day message:

Gov. Fallin Comments on Veterans Day

11/11/2013 08:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement concerning Veterans Day:

“We owe our veterans and active-duty military

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on Release of NAEP Scores

11/07/2013 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement regarding the release of Oklahoma’s 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores. The scores test the proficiency of fourth and eighth grade students in English and math. For more details, view the scores and the State Department of Education’s press release [here](#).

“This year’s NAEP scores represent mixed results for Oklahoma schools. As a state, we are improving. Fourth grade math scores, for instance, are the highest they have been in ten years. That’s great news. We have the hard work of Oklahoma teachers, administrators, parents and students to thank for that forward progress. It’s also an indication that some of our reform efforts are beginning to deliver results.

“Oklahoma continues, however,

Governor Mary Fallin’s Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive Exceeds Goal

11/07/2013 01:30 PM CST

Raises More than 2.9 Million Meals for Hungry Oklahomans

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin’s fourth annual Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive raised more than 2.9 million meals for hungry Oklahomans this holiday season. The drive, which ran throughout October, exceeded its goal of raising 1.4 million meals. In total, the drive raised \$390,659 and 1,179,087 pounds of food. A portion of the donations will also benefit Oklahomans impacted by the May tornadoes.

“I am continually overwhelmed by the support and generosity shown by Oklahomans in all 77 counties, and this year’s food drive proves to be no different,” Fallin said. “I want to especially thank all the sponsors and the caring people of this state who donated their time and resources to help feed our neighbors in Oklahoma. Oklahoma is a great place because of its people. Their support of this food drive ensures more Oklahoma families will have

Oklahoma National Guard Acts on Same Sex Benefits

11/06/2013 04:15 PM CST

New Policy Protects Oklahoma Constitution and Oklahoma Laws

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, after consulting with Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt and Oklahoma Adjutant General Myles Deering, today announced that National Guard facilities and employees funded with state dollars will not process benefits for married, same-sex couples. The Oklahoma Constitution explicitly defines marriage as between a man and a woman. It also prohibits the conveyance of marriage benefits onto same sex couples. It is therefore illegal for state employees or state-funded facilities to process same sex benefits. The provision of the Oklahoma Constitution defining marriage was added as the result of a 2004 ballot provision that passed with 75 percent of the popular vote.

Last week, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered the National Guard to comply with federal rules that recognize same sex benefits. In response to that order, General

Okla. Sec. of Education and Workforce Sommers Issues Statement on A-F Grades for Public Schools

11/06/2013 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahoma’s secretary of education and workforce, Dr. Robert Sommers, today issued the following statement regarding the release of the State Department of Education’s A-F grades for Oklahoma Public Schools. In addition to serving on Governor Mary Fallin’s cabinet, Sommers also serves as the director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Previously, he served as the superintendent of Butler Technology and Career Development Schools in Ohio.

“As a superintendent, I championed the use of data to reform my school district. In 2001, the data showed my district was doing poorly. We were ranked 42nd out of 49 Ohio tech centers.

“In response to that ranking, which revealed that our students were underperforming, our staff and student body committed ourselves to improvement. After a lot of hard work, we were eventually ranked first in student performance for three years in a row.

Gov. Fallin Statement on Release of A-F Grades for Oklahoma Public Schools

11/06/2013 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s release of A-F grades for public schools. The grades are available online at afreportcards.ok.gov.

"Delivering high quality public education is one of the most important things we can do in Oklahoma to increase prosperity in our state. Good schools teach children the skills they need to succeed when they enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education. They also help to produce the highly skilled workforce that we need to retain and attract businesses and jobs to Oklahoma.

"We have many great teachers and schools that are helping to produce positive outcomes and improve student performance. Those teachers and schools deserve recognition. Unfortunately, we know we are also falling short in many areas. Historically below average NAEP scores in reading,

Tulsa World: Robert Sommers: Schools matter in student performance

11/06/2013 12:15 PM CST

By Robert Sommers

The Oklahoma Legislature established a school-by-school A-F grading system in 2011. The system is designed to provide parents and communities with a clear understanding of how well their schools are doing.

A group of researchers at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University have decided to oppose the A-F school grading system because they consider it unfair.

Unfortunately, their sense of what is fair is based on flawed thinking about educational quality and gives little credit to great educators.

Particularly troubling is their claim that schools have little influence over student performance. The study criticizes the grading system — designed to give parents an easily understood measurement of school quality — arguing that it is unfair to hold schools accountable for student performance.

In fact, the authors argue that the effect of public schools on student test results is only

Governor Mary Fallin Clarifies Position on School Funding and A-F Grading

11/05/2013 12:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – On Sunday, the *Tulsa World* reported that Governor Mary Fallin's spokesman Alex Weintz criticized a report issued by professors from OU and OSU that attacked the substance of the A-F public school grading system. The *World* reports:

Weintz said the governor is "dismayed" to see groups representing the education community touting a report issued by researchers at University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University as a way to wage a campaign against A-F.

Weintz cited a portion of the report that he said indicates the authors believe that schools are only responsible for 20 to 30 percent of student achievement. In that portion, the authors question whether school performance should be based solely on student standardized test results.

Weintz said Fallin believes test scores are an adequate way to

A-F Grades for Schools will Help Improve Public Education

11/04/2013 04:00 PM CST

Oklahoma has great teachers and great schools. No one deserves more respect or thanks than our teachers, who are doing difficult and important jobs for modest salaries. Many teachers make a profound difference in the lives of their students, instilling them with academic passions that lead to successful careers and fulfilling lives.

These successes should be applauded and celebrated. But just as we should not ignore our many successes, nor should we turn a blind eye to our system's shortcomings. Those shortcomings are real: data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, for instance, shows that 73 percent of Oklahoma fourth graders are below proficient in reading and 66 percent are below proficient in Math. Furthermore, when our high school graduates reach college, they are often doing so without the skill-sets needed to succeed in college courses. More than two in every five Oklahoma college students must take remedial courses, adding time and expense

Gov. Fallin Hosts Summit in New Mexico

11/04/2013 11:15 AM CST

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin Discusses Education and Workforce Issues, Calls for 'New Minimum'

SANTA FE, NM—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair **Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin** brought together state teams to discuss her yearlong effort, [*America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs*](#). She was joined by **American Samoa Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga** and **Utah Gov. Gary Herbert**. The initiative focuses on improving state education and workforce training systems and aligning those systems with the needs of individual state economies.

Fifty years ago, nearly 80 percent of all jobs required only a high school diploma or less and most paid a good wage, **Fallin** noted. Today that number has dropped to 35 percent for jobs available to high

Gov. Fallin Makes Final Appointments to Workers' Compensation Commission

10/31/2013 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today selected longtime Oklahoma City attorney Robert H. Gilliland and Denise Engle, a deputy insurance commissioner, to serve on the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission. Their appointments are effective Nov. 6, 2013.

Gilliland, of Oklahoma City, is a veteran attorney. His practice is concentrated in the area of business litigation in both state and federal courts, including oil and gas litigation, contract litigation, environmental litigation, products liability and securities litigation.

“Robert Gilliland brings a wealth of legal experience that will serve him well as he works to help craft a fair and efficient way to deal with injured workers on the job,” Governor Fallin said. “I’m delighted he has agreed to serve on this important commission.”

Engle, of Canadian County, will step down as a deputy insurance commissioner at the

The Journal Record: Fourth Reading: Teague able to take on challenges

10/25/2013 01:45 PM CDT

By: M. Scott Carter

The Journal Record / Capitol bureau reporter

When she announced earlier this year that she planned to combine the cabinet posts of secretary of the energy and the secretary of the environment, many were skeptical of Republican Gov. Mary Fallin’s idea.

Environmentalists worried that the new secretary – whoever he or she was – would simply be a shill for the oil and gas industry. Oil and gas supporters complained that they needed someone experienced who understood their needs and not a tree-hugger.

Enter retired Col. Michael Teague.

Teague, the former commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District, was named as the new secretary of energy and environment in August.

So far, the colonel is off to an excellent start.

Easy to talk to, sincere and interested, Teague's

[Join Us in the Fight Against Hunger](#)

10/23/2013 10:00 AM CDT

By: Governor Mary Fallin, Executive Director of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma Rodney Bivens, and Executive Director of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma Eileen Bradshaw

Hunger does not discriminate against race or gender. Hunger envelopes families and entire communities, and in Oklahoma it affects 675,000 people.

The statistics are distressing: one in six Oklahomans wake up each morning not knowing where their next meal may come from; one in four Oklahoma children are at risk of going hungry daily.

Oklahoma consistently ranks in the top 10 hungriest states in the nation. In May, our state was devastated by the tornadoes, further increasing the number of families who are food-insecure in Oklahoma. Oklahoma food banks provide enough food for more than 150,000 people each week, and that demand increases during the holidays.

As the holiday season approaches and all of its wonderful meals are being planned,

[Gov. Fallin Announces Appointments to Judicial Nominating Commission](#)

10/22/2013 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Steve Turnbo and Gill Luton to the Judicial Nominating Commission. Each appointee will serve a six-year term. Senate confirmation is not required.

Members of the commission nominate candidates for appointment by the governor to fill vacancies on the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court of Appeals, district and associate district judgeships, and the Workers' Compensation Court.

The commission has 15 members. Six members are to be lawyers elected by the Oklahoma Bar Association, one selected from each of the six Oklahoma congressional districts as they existed in 1967. Six non-lawyer members are

appointed by the governor, also from the six congressional districts. The remaining three appointees, also non-lawyer members, are selected by the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate president pro tempore and a majority vote of the Judicial Nominating

Gov. Fallin Hosts First NGA Summit in Connecticut

10/22/2013 09:15 AM CDT

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy Discuss Education and Workforce Issues, Call for a New Minimum

STAMFORD, CT—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair **Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin**, along with co-host **Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy**, brought together state teams to discuss her yearlong effort [*America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs*](#). The initiative focuses on improving state education and workforce training systems and aligning those systems with the needs of individual state economies.

“Developing a highly educated workforce and closing the skills gaps in our states is essential to ensuring our children’s futures and strengthening our economies,” **Gov. Fallin** said. “By bringing these state teams together to

Associated Press: Gov. Fallin leads discussion at NGA meeting in Connecticut

10/22/2013 08:00 AM CDT

STAMFORD, Connecticut — Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin, the chair of the National Governors Association, is appearing in Stamford for the first of three regional summits across the country on education and workforce training.

Fallin is scheduled to meet today with Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who is the chair of the NGA's education and workforce committee. Other governors are expected to send representatives to the meeting, to be held at the Stamford Marriott Hotel.

A roundtable discussion is also planned to discuss what states are doing to better align education, workforce training and economic development to the needs of employers.

Malloy is expected to highlight investments made in education, pre-kindergarten through college, during his tenure as governor.

Fallin chose the issue of workforce training as her key initiative during her NGA chairmanship.

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Passing of Newspaper Publisher J. Leland Gourley

10/19/2013 07:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today on the passing of J. Leland Gourley, editor and publisher of the Oklahoma City FRIDAY newspaper:

“J. Leland Gourley was a talented and committed journalist who cared deeply for the Nichols Hills and The Village communities that his suburban newspaper covered. He also loved Oklahoma, and was not bashful about expressing his opinions in columns on various state issues. He left his mark on Oklahoma. He was a personal friend who I admired and respected. My prayers and deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends during this time of loss.”

Gov. Fallin Appoints Steven Kendall Associate District Judge of Garvin County

10/18/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Steven Kendall as the associate district judge for Garvin County. He is replacing Judge John Blake who is retiring. Kendall will begin service immediately.

Kendall, of Pauls Valley, is currently an attorney at Garvin, Agee, Carlton and Mashburn, a law firm that focuses on civil and commercial litigation.

He previously served as a private practice attorney while contracting with the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System. Kendall also served as an assistant district attorney in Cleveland County.

“Throughout his career, Steven Kendall has proven himself to be an effective professional who has served in both the public and private sector,” Fallin said. “With his many years of service, I know he will serve the state and Garvin County well.”

He was also in the United States Army Reserve and received an honorable discharge in

Gov. Fallin Statement on the Passing of Former State Rep. Bob Ed Culver

10/17/2013 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the passing of former state Representative Bob Ed Culver:

“Bob Ed was a good friend, and it was a privilege serving with him. He took his duty to the state seriously and was dedicated to representing his constituents. He will be greatly missed by all. Please join me in keeping his family and friends in our prayers.”

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NOTE: The governor served four years, 1990-94, in the Oklahoma House of Representatives with former Rep. Bob Ed Culver.

Gov. Fallin: State Resources Should Not Be Used to Fund Federal Programs During Shutdown

10/15/2013 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – At Governor Mary Fallin’s direction, Oklahoma Secretary of Finance, Administration and Information Technology Preston Doerflinger today sent a letter to all state agencies directing them not to use state dollars to temporarily fund federal programs during the ongoing shutdown of the federal government unless federal reimbursement is guaranteed.

Governor Fallin also issued the following statement:

“The state of Oklahoma doesn’t have the resources to prop up federal programs with state dollars if the federal government shutdown continues. It’s simple math. The money just isn’t there. There is agreement between the governor’s office and legislative leadership that the state is not in a position to put itself on the hook for federal responsibilities.

“Oklahoma can’t and won’t take the federal government’s path of

Gov. Fallin Declares Drought for Five Counties, Announces State Assistance

10/15/2013 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Despite recent rains across a significant portion of Oklahoma, several counties are still suffering from a severe drought. Governor Mary Fallin declared a drought emergency today for much of southwestern Oklahoma and a portion of the Panhandle region. The [declaration](#) is based upon extreme-to-exceptional drought delineations specified by the latest U.S. Drought Monitor. The affected counties include Jackson, Tillman, Greer, Harmon and Texas.

Coinciding with the declaration, the Governor also announced the availability of state funds to provide much-needed drought assistance in those counties. Oklahoma's new Emergency Drought Relief Fund, enabled through HB 1923, passed last year, includes grant funding for drought mitigation and related projects.

"These five counties have faced three years of unrelenting drought," said Fallin.

Gov. Fallin Appoints Dan Keating to State Board of Education

10/11/2013 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today appointed Daniel Keating to the State Board of Education. Keating will represent the First Congressional District and replace Joy Hofmeister, who stepped down from the board. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Keating is currently the president of Summit

Gov. Fallin Names Larry Parman Secretary of Commerce and Director of the Department of Commerce

10/10/2013 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that Oklahoma Secretary of State Larry V. Parman will be appointed the director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) and become the governor’s secretary of commerce on Nov. 1. Both positions require Senate confirmation.

On the governor’s Cabinet, Parman is succeeding Dave Lopez, who stepped down as state commerce secretary in August to assume the position of interim superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools.

Parman will replace Vaughn Clark at ODOC. Clark has been acting executive director since September 2013.

Parman will step down from his current position as secretary of state on Nov.1.

Parman said he was excited for the opportunity to pursue economic development opportunities in Oklahoma.

“Governor Fallin has outlined an aggressive agenda to promote job growth and investment in the state of Oklahoma,” said Parman.

Oklahoma Energy Producers are Leading a National Energy Revolution

10/07/2013 04:15 PM CDT

This week, energy leaders, environmental experts, education professionals and a host of other industry specialists will gather in Tulsa for the Third Annual Oklahoma Governor’s Energy Conference.

The conference, which began in 2011 in Oklahoma City, has become an important yearly event and a time when academics, professionals and policymakers can brainstorm on how best to support our state’s energy industry.

As any Oklahoman knows, energy production is an essential part of our economy. In fact, one in seven Oklahomans currently works either for an energy company or a job supported by the industry. And revenue from oil and gas production taxes regularly comes in at hundreds of millions of dollars each year, helping to support Oklahoma schools, public safety and health initiatives.

We’ve all heard the term “economic stimulus,” usually from Washington politicians trying to sell their latest Big Government plan. But the

Gov. Fallin Withdraws Extradition Request for Dusten Brown

10/02/2013 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today withdrew the extradition warrant for Dusten Brown, biological father of Baby Veronica. Governor Fallin’s order came after South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley withdrew her request for extradition, citing the “exceptional nature” of the case as well as Brown’s compliance with Oklahoma and South Carolina court orders.

Governor Fallin issued the following statement:

“My heart goes out to Dusten Brown as well as the Capobianco family. Both have suffered through a long and emotionally exhausting ordeal regarding a young girl they clearly love and wish the best for. I am thankful that Governor Haley has dropped her extradition request, understanding that Mr. Brown has complied with court orders from both South Carolina and Oklahoma courts. It is my hope this legal matter will be closed and that all parties – especially Veronica – can find peace and stability in their

Gov. Fallin Welcomes Rolls-Royce to Tinker AFB

10/02/2013 09:15 AM CDT

Rolls-Royce will open a new engine depot services facility at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma to support the US Air Force Global Hawk fleet. The company has been awarded a \$49 million contract to establish the new facility, which is expected to begin operations in 2015.

The facility will be the first for Rolls-Royce at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex (OC-ALC), one of the largest units within the Air Force Materiel Command, and the Air Force's Center of Excellence for jet propulsion. The contract was recently awarded by the Global Hawk Systems Program Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

This will be the company's first Public-Private Partnership to provide engine services for the US Air Force. OC-ALC will be designated an Authorized Military Overhaul Facility for Rolls-Royce AE 3007H engines.

Paul Craig, Rolls-Royce, President Defense Services, said, "*We look forward to working with the US*

Governor Kicks Off 4th Annual Food Drive

10/01/2013 04:00 PM CDT

Goal is to raise 1.4 million meals

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin's Fourth Annual Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive kicked off Tuesday with the goal of raising 1.4 million meals to help feed hungry families, children, seniors and those affected by the May tornadoes. The month-long food drive will benefit the [Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma](#), the [Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma](#), and their partner agencies across the state.

"Time and again, Oklahomans have proven themselves to be the most caring and giving individuals in the nation," Fallin said. "Last year, Oklahomans from all 77 counties came together and donated over 2 million meals in time for the holiday season. This year, we can do even more for the hungry in our state."

Oklahoma consistently ranks among the top 10 hungriest states in the nation, with

Gov. Fallin Encourages Oklahomans to Wear Purple to Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence

10/01/2013 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (OCADVSA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) and Verizon Wireless Oklahoma are encouraging Oklahomans to wear purple Thursday, Oct. 3, to show support for victims of domestic violence and to raise awareness of this rapidly-growing crime.

“Domestic violence affects many people in the state of Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “I strongly believe that taking a stand against domestic violence as well as reaching out to help victims is important for our community. I am encouraged by the efforts of OCADVSA, YWCA and DVIS and Verizon Wireless Oklahoma to raising awareness within our state. I encourage all Oklahomans to wear purple on Oct. 3 to show their support for the victims of domestic violence.”

Wear Purple Day in Oklahoma will take place on Thursday, October 3 and is

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointment to the Oklahoma State Board of Education

09/27/2013 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Cathryn Franks to the Oklahoma State Board of Education. She is replacing Bryan Haden, who resigned. Franks will serve the remainder of his term ending in April 2015, pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Franks is a former history teacher who taught at Killeen High School in Texas. She was twice named “teacher of the year.” She also taught U. S. history classes in Germany and Korea.

Now a resident of Roosevelt, Oklahoma, she is the director of international cultural education for Musco Lighting International, a company that provides lighting at major sporting events and stadiums around the world.

Franks previously served as an executive board member for the Military Child Education Coalition, a non-profit organization that works to ensure quality educational opportunities for military children affected by mobility, family separation and

Governor Mary Fallin Cautions Against Scams as Federal Health Insurance Marketplace Opens

09/27/2013 10:30 AM CDT

Oklahomans Seeking Information Should Visit Healthcare.gov; Call Federally Operated Help Lines

OKLAHOMA CITY -- On Tuesday, October 1, Oklahomans will be able to apply for health insurance through a federally run Health Insurance Marketplace. The new insurance marketplace is not a state entity and is not run by state employees. Governor Mary Fallin has instructed state employees to refer inquiries about the new marketplace to the federal call center and websites. Individuals who call state offices will be referred to HealthCare.gov or 1-800-318-2596. Those inquiring on behalf of businesses will be referred to the number 1-800-706-7893.

As the new marketplace is launched, Governor Fallin is cautioning all Oklahomans to protect their personal information and to beware of fraud. No one should call or visit your home without your permission, even if they say they are with the marketplace.

Governor Mary Fallin to Host Energy Conference in Tulsa

09/20/2013 08:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will join leading energy industry officials as well as key policy makers in Tulsa next month for the third annual Governor’s Energy Conference. The conference will be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9, at the Tulsa Cox Business Center in Tulsa.

This year’s conference is presented by the governor and the University of Tulsa Collins College of Business in partnership with the office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the State Chamber of Oklahoma, the Tulsa Regional Chamber and Saxum.

“Oklahoma is a national leader in energy and innovation,” Fallin said. “This conference is a great opportunity to bring together industry leaders and policy makers to discuss how we can support Oklahoma energy production and energy jobs.”

The conference features input and presentations from

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Ed Townsend to GRDA Board of Directors

09/18/2013 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Ed Townsend of Grove to the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) board of directors. Townsend succeeds Gregory Grodhaus, and will serve a five-year term.

Townsend is the founder, owner and chief executive officer of Bank of Grove. He previously served as chairman and CEO of Local Oklahoma Bank, a \$3.3 billion commercial bank based in Oklahoma City.

“Ed’s business sense and commitment to the Oklahoma community will make him a great asset to the GRDA board,” Fallin said.

He also served as chairman of Integris Health based in Oklahoma City and was instrumental in getting the 58-bed hospital built in Grove, Oklahoma in 2010. Because of his commitment, an area of the hospital is named the Townsend Women and Children’s Center.

Townsend received bachelor’s degrees in economics and accounting as well as a master’s in business

Gov. Mary Fallin Headlines National Press Club Luncheon

09/17/2013 12:15 PM CDT

WASHINGTON—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair **Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin** today addressed a sold-out luncheon at the National Press Club, where she discussed her yearlong effort, [*America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs*](#).

The initiative will focus on improving state education and workforce training systems and aligning those systems with the needs of individual state economies.

“Preparing our workforce to keep pace and remain competitive is an issue that calls for national attention and demands gubernatorial leadership,” **Gov. Fallin** said. “Our future economic security will require significant improvements to our education system and workforce training programs. It will also require closer relationships among our high schools, colleges, career-tech programs,

Governor Mary Fallin reappoints Joseph Parker to State Regents for Higher Education

09/16/2013 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has reappointed Joseph Parker of Tulsa to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

He was first appointed in 2005 by Governor Brad Henry. Parker will serve a nine-year term pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

“Joseph Parker has spent the last seven years as a regent working to ensure Oklahoma continues to provide world class opportunities in higher education,” Fallin said. “The regents will continue to benefit from his experience and dedication.”

Parker is chairman of the board for Anchor Stone Co. in Tulsa, a company involved in the production of crushed limestone, sand and gravel and in heavy equipment brokerage. In addition, he also serves as the chairman for the Regents Investment Committee and co-chair for the Regents Online Education Task Force.

Parker also serves on numerous civic boards, including the Jasmine Moran

Governor Mary Fallin appoints Roger Webb to the OSBI commission

09/13/2013 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Roger Webb to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) Commission. He is replacing Anne Holzberlein who resigned and will serve the remainder of her term ending in July 2017 pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

“Roger is an experienced leader, a former DPS commissioner and a member of the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Hall of Fame,” said Fallin. “He will be a great addition

to the OSBI commission, where he can continue to support law enforcement and help to keep Oklahomans safe.”

Webb, of Arcadia, is president emeritus of the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO), where he served as president from 1997 to 2011. He is currently the vice chairman of the board at Citizen’s Bank in Edmond and also works as a consultant for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher

Former House speaker named to board

09/12/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has nominated former Oklahoma House Speaker Todd Hiett to serve on the State Board of Career and Technology Education.

Hiett, of Kellyville, was the first Republican to serve as speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives in more than 80 years. He served in the House from 1995 until 2007, and was speaker during his final two years in office after Republicans gained control in the 2004 elections.

His nomination requires Senate confirmation. Hiett, 46, will succeed Harold Anglin, of Pryor, who resigned.

Hiett will serve on an interim basis until confirmation; senators will take up his nomination during next year’s session, which begins Feb. 3. His term will expire April 1, 2015.

“Education is key to Oklahoma’s long-term prosperity,” Governor Fallin said. “Todd Hiett knows the importance of education to the future of Oklahoma. He will strive

Tulsa World: Editorial: The ‘special interest’ in the special session was Oklahoma

09/12/2013 09:30 AM CDT

By World’s Editorial Writers

Posted: Sept. 12

Gov. Mary Fallin tied the final ribbon around the special legislative session Tuesday, signing all 23 bills that the Legislature sent to her.

The week-long special session restored common-sense lawsuit reform measures originally passed in 2009, when Gov. Brad Henry signed them into law.

The measures protect people doing business in the state without giving away the rights of people with legitimate cases.

Earlier this summer, the Oklahoma Supreme Court declared the 2009 laws unconstitutional largely because many of them were rolled into one statute - violating

the state Constitution's ban on multiple-topic legislation.

The special session unwound the big law into bite-sized pieces, all of which passed.

The most contentious piece of the puzzle was the so-called certificate of merit bill, which requires a relevant expert

Governor Fallin Statement on Anniversary of September 11

09/11/2013 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the anniversary of September 11, 2001.

“Twelve years after 9-11, the United States of America remains the world’s greatest beacon of liberty. Rather than allow the most devastating terrorist attack in national history to jeopardize or weaken our principles, we have redoubled our commitments to democratic freedoms and our opposition to tyranny and oppression.

“Today, let us remember and pray for the victims of 9-11 and their families. Let us also give thanks for the first responders, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice, to save the lives of others. Finally, let’s express our gratitude for the men and women of our Armed Services who risk their lives to protect the liberty of others, both here at home and abroad.”

Governor commends lawmakers for special session work

09/10/2013 08:45 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin says she appreciates legislators acting quickly to pass lawsuit reform measures during the special session that adjourned today

OKLAHOMA CITY –Gov. Mary Fallin today applauded legislators for quickly passing a series of lawsuit reform measures and bringing the special session to a close.

“I appreciate lawmakers acting quickly to bring our special session to a successful close,” the governor said. “Their efficient work will minimize the costs of the session and save taxpayer dollars.”

The House and Senate sent 23 bills related to lawsuit reform to her desk in five business days. The governor

Governor Mary Fallin Makes Workers’ Comp Transition Team Appointment

09/09/2013 12:30 PM CDT

Oklahoma Commerce Department Executive Director Jonna D. Kirschner will work on changing the court-based system to an administrative one.

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that Jonna D. Kirschner, executive director of the Oklahoma Commerce Department, will serve on

a transition team to establish a new workers' compensation system authorized by state legislation passed and signed into law earlier this year.

Kirschner was appointed by Fallin in November to the top Commerce Department position after serving as deputy director and general counsel for the agency since 2003.

She starts her new duties Sept. 19.

The governor named Vaughn Clark, the Commerce Department's director of community development, to serve as interim executive director. Clark, of Oklahoma City, has been community development director since 2003 and has been with the agency since 1994.

Kirschner

Governor Fallin Announces Extension of Insure Oklahoma

09/06/2013 10:30 AM CDT

Major Victory for State Saves Thousands of Oklahomans from Losing Health Insurance

OKLAHOMA CITY – In a major victory for Oklahomans, Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has negotiated a one year extension for the Insure Oklahoma program. The program provides health insurance for nearly 30,000 working, low-income Oklahomans. It is funded by the state's tobacco tax matched with federal dollars. Earlier this year, the federal government announced it would not continue its support of Insure Oklahoma and the state should expect the program to expire at the beginning of 2014.

After the announcement that Insure Oklahoma would expire, Fallin directly contacted both President Obama and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to underscore the importance of the program to the state. Officials with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, at the governor's direction, also spent months in

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Extradition Order for Dusten Brown

09/04/2013 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed the extradition order for Dusten Brown, the biological father of "Baby Veronica."

Brown is contesting Veronica's adoption to Matt and Melanie Capobianco of Charleston, South Carolina. His arguments have now been rejected by the United States Supreme Court as well as courts in South Carolina and Oklahoma.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley requested Brown's extradition from Oklahoma to South Carolina on August 13. Brown, who has refused to release Veronica to her adopted parents, faces charges of custodial interference in South Carolina.

Brown's extradition does not affect the current placement of Baby Veronica.

"My goal in the Baby Veronica case has been to encourage both Mr. Brown and the Capobianco family to reach a quick settlement and come to an agreement that protects Veronica's best interests," Fallin said. "I said

Special Session: Why Lawsuit Reform Must be Addressed Now

09/03/2013 03:15 PM CDT

The legislative session usually runs from February to May, but this year, legislators are returning to the Capitol in the first week of September.

I have asked them to return to work for a "Special Session" to address an issue I think is of high importance to the state, our medical community and our prospects for economic growth and job creation. That issue is lawsuit reform.

First, a brief history lesson: In 2009, Oklahoma was facing a legal climate that many believed was hostile to businesses and encouraged frivolous lawsuits. These lawsuits were particularly damaging to doctors and medical professionals, who were frequent targets of medical malpractice claims. This was becoming a larger and larger problem; the number of medical malpractice payments was almost 10 percent larger in 2009 than the year before.

The results were predictable. Businesses were afraid to invest in a state where they could anticipate spending a large

Editorial: Tulsa World: Now is the time to deal with lawsuit reform

09/03/2013 01:15 PM CDT

The Oklahoma Legislature begins a special session Tuesday to reconfigure the state's lawsuit reform statutes.

The statutes were passed in 2009 and 2011, but were killed earlier this year by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Among other things, the 2009 law restricted court-shopping for class-action lawsuits and contained a provision for the review of attorney fees in class-action suits. It also limited non-economic damages, such as pain and suffering.

The Supreme Court ruled that the 2009 law dealt with more than one topic and was therefore unconstitutional, although another non-economic damage cap law remains in effect.

The 2011 law required expert certification for professional negligence cases, such as malpractice suits.

The high court found that was an unconstitutional monetary barrier to justice.

Now, Gov. Mary Fallin proposes cutting up the pre-existing law into smaller,

Moore, State of Oklahoma Receive Grant Money for Disaster Recovery

08/30/2013 03:30 PM CDT

WASHINGTON – U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan today announced nearly \$37 million in disaster recovery aid to the City of Moore, Oklahoma and to the State of Oklahoma to help local communities recover from a devastating spate of storms, including a powerful tornado that struck Moore on May 20th. These grants are provided through HUD’s *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program* to support long-term disaster recovery efforts in areas with the greatest extent of ‘unmet need.’

The City of Moore will receive \$26.3 million to supplement other forms of public and private disaster aid following May’s powerful EF5 tornado with its winds exceeding 200 miles per hour. In addition, the State of Oklahoma will receive \$10.6 million to support local recovery efforts following these powerful storms that occurred from May 18th through June

Fallin, Boren, Hargis Applaud SDE for Increasing Rigor in Assessments

08/29/2013 08:45 AM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin, University of Oklahoma President David Boren and Oklahoma State University President Burns Hargis today released statements in support of higher standards in K-12 public education. Their statements came as the Oklahoma State Department of Education released preliminary student test scores based on more rigorous assessments. Fallin, Boren and Hargis believe these higher standards and increased rigor are essential for improving student performance.

Governor Mary Fallin:

“Nothing is more important to the prosperity of this state and its residents than high quality education. To deliver that education and ensure our children have the skills they need to succeed in today’s economy, Oklahoma must raise the bar when it comes to academic standards.

“Oklahoma has great teachers and great schools. If we increase rigor in the classroom, students will rise to the challenge. We know that requiring

Governor Mary Fallin Names Michael McNutt to Press Secretary Position

08/28/2013 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Michael McNutt, a longtime capitol reporter with *The Oklahoman*, will be joining her staff as press secretary. McNutt begins September 6, joining a press team that includes Communications Director Alex Weintz and Deputy Press Secretary Alex Gerszewski.

McNutt has worked nearly 30 years for *The Oklahoman*, including eight years at the paper's Capitol Bureau. During that time he covered the office of the governor, the House of Representatives, various state agencies and a number of political campaigns. Before joining the Capitol Bureau, he served as *The Oklahoman's* assistant news editor and assistant city editor. He has also worked in the newspaper's Enid bureau and for newspapers in Enid, Oklahoma, and Rolla, Missouri.

Fallin said that McNutt's experience, depth of knowledge and passion for communicating information will serve him

Governor Fallin Appoints Troy Wilson to the Oklahoma Worker's Compensation Commission

08/26/2013 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today selected Troy Wilson, Sr. as her first appointee and chairman of the Oklahoma Worker's Compensation Commission. Wilson worked from 1967 to 1980 for Xerox Corporation, working out of offices in New York, Texas and Oklahoma City. He served as the Oklahoma branch manager for Xerox from 1972 to 1980, managing over 300 employees. From 1980 to 1985, he was the president and owner of Business Unlimited Inc, a business brokerage organization with offices in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Wilson is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and a member of Leadership OKC's Inaugural class in 1981. He was born in Blackwell, Oklahoma.

In 1985, Wilson left Oklahoma to become the CEO of Montgomery Bank, a community banking institution with over \$900 million in assets. In 2006, he retired as CEO and became Chairman of the Board of Montgomery Bancorporation, Inc.

Gov. Fallin Applauds OKC School Board for Selection of Dave Lopez as Interim School Superintendent

08/26/2013 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the Oklahoma City School Board's selection of Dave Lopez as interim school superintendent. Lopez currently serves as Fallin's secretary of commerce. He has announced his resignation, effective on August 30.

Prior to serving as secretary of commerce (Jan 2011 – Aug. 2013) and director of the Department of Commerce (Jan 2011 – Nov. 2012) Lopez served as president of Oklahoma City-based American Fidelity Foundation, a charitable foundation that gives grants for economic development, education, human services and the arts. Lopez also served as president of SBC Communications (now AT&T) in Oklahoma and Texas.

“Dave Lopez is a successful businessman who understands the skills our children need to succeed in the workforce,” said Fallin. “He’s also a proven and capable leader who understands how to manage a budget and a large number of

Governor Fallin Invites Oklahomans to Septemberfest on Saturday, Sept. 7

08/23/2013 12:30 PM CDT

17th Annual Septemberfest to Feature a Wide Variety of Free Family Fun

at the Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion and Oklahoma History Center

OKLAHOMA CITY (Aug. 23, 2013) – Fall is just around the corner and with it comes one of the state’s most exciting events: Septemberfest! Hosted by Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen, the 17th annual Septemberfest will be held on Saturday, September 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion and Oklahoma History Center.

Septemberfest is a celebration of the culture and history that make Oklahoma unique. This year’s event will feature arts and crafts, the Oklahoma City Thunder Girls, a chalk artist, sports activities, inflatables, carriage rides, steer roping, live

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at the Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion and Oklahoma History Center

OKLAHOMA CITY (Aug. 23, 2013) – Fall is just around the corner and with it comes one of the state’s most exciting events: Septemberfest! Hosted by Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen, the 17th annual Septemberfest will be held on Saturday, September 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion and Oklahoma History Center.

Septemberfest is a celebration of the culture and history that make Oklahoma unique. This year’s event will feature arts and crafts, the Oklahoma City Thunder Girls, a chalk artist, sports activities, inflatables, carriage rides, steer roping, live

Governor Mary Fallin, Chief Bill John Baker Sign Car Tag Compact

08/16/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.— Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker and Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed agreements Friday that will allow Cherokee citizens living in all 77 Oklahoma counties to buy a Cherokee Nation license plate.

“This is a historic day for the Cherokee Nation,” Chief Baker said. “I am so proud that our Nation will now allow every Cherokee citizen across all 77 counties to display a Cherokee tag on their car or recreational vehicle. By doing so we are strengthening our sovereignty, creating more jobs and lowering the costs of car tags for thousands of Cherokees.”

The Cherokee Nation is the first tribe in Oklahoma to offer car tags to its citizens statewide. Two compacts were signed by the Chief and the Governor at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

“Today’s agreement is a product of a good working relationship and a mutual respect between the Cherokee Nation and the state of

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints New Secretary of Energy and Environment

08/16/2013 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Col. Michael Teague to the position of secretary of energy and environment. Teague will begin in his new role on September 3 of this year.

The position of secretary of energy and environment is new, combining the positions of secretary of energy, previously held by Michael Ming, and secretary of environment, previously held by Gary Sherrer.

Fallin said the two policy areas are linked, making it practical to combine them under one cabinet post.

“Strong energy policy is strong environmental policy,” said Fallin. “In Col. Teague’s new role, his mission will be to help develop policies that encourage energy exploration and production as well as responsible environmental stewardship. His years of experience dealing with energy production and distribution, infrastructure development, and water management will

Governor Mary Fallin Suspends GRDA Taskforce

08/13/2013 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today announced that she is suspending a taskforce designed to study the operations of the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA). Fallin said that while she still supports the mission of the taskforce, its work might unintentionally and negatively affect the GRDA’s future bond ratings.

The GRDA board is expected to vote as early as this Wednesday on the creation of a new natural gas-fired power plant. The project, estimated to cost \$300 million, would be paid for by bonds let through the GRDA.

GRDA board members previously delayed voting on the new power plant at Fallin's request. In July, the governor asked board members to take more time to review the issue and to wait on the recommendations of an independent study. They did so, and Fallin says she is now satisfied that GRDA leadership has done their due diligence and is able to make an informed decision.

Governor Mary Fallin Calls Special Session on Lawsuit Reform

08/12/2013 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued an [executive order](#) calling for a special session of the Oklahoma Legislature, to begin Tuesday, September 3. The executive order calls on lawmakers to re-institute components of House Bill 1603, a comprehensive lawsuit reform package signed into law in 2009.

HB 1603 was designed to reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits and medical malpractice claims filed in Oklahoma, making the state more business friendly and protecting Oklahoma physicians from frivolous lawsuits. It was passed with bipartisan support and signed into law by Democratic Governor Brad Henry.

Earlier this year, the law was struck down by the Oklahoma Supreme Court for violating the Constitution's "single-subject" rule, a prohibition on legislative logrolling. Fallin is calling on legislators to separate the law into appropriate bills, thus reinstating the

Gov. Fallin and First Gentleman Christensen to Host 17th Annual Septemberfest, Saturday, Sept. 7

08/08/2013 11:15 AM CDT

Editor's Note: For photos, please contact Friends of the Mansion Director Keili McEwen or [click here](#).

OKLAHOMA CITY – Preparations are underway for the 17th annual Septemberfest to be held Saturday, September 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Governor's Mansion and Oklahoma History Center. Hosted by Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen, Septemberfest is a free annual event for the whole family.

"Septemberfest is a beloved fall tradition for many Oklahoma families," said Governor Fallin. "The First Gentleman and I are excited to open the Governor's Mansion and its beautiful grounds to Oklahomans from across our great state as we proudly host the 17th annual Septemberfest."

A celebration of what makes Oklahoma unique; Septemberfest features a variety of attractions for

[America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs](#)

08/05/2013 03:15 PM CDT

At the beginning of this month, I had the privilege and honor of becoming the new chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), a bipartisan group representing the nation's governors. Part of assuming this new role includes presenting a chair's initiative – a national effort focused on developing policy in a specific area.

There are many important issues that have a profound impact on Oklahomans and Americans everywhere. I believe one area that will have perhaps the greatest impact on the future of this country and its economic trajectory is education, specifically, our ability to train and field a well-educated, highly skilled workforce.

Finding ways to improve our workforce in all 50 states is the focus of my initiative, called "America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs."

This initiative recognizes that Americans today are facing a "new

[America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs](#)

08/05/2013 03:15 PM CDT

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[New NGA Chair Announces Yearlong Initiative](#)

08/05/2013 09:15 AM CDT

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN—Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin officially became chair of the National Governors Association (NGA) today during the closing session of the NGA Summer Meeting. **Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper** was named vice chair.

Gov. Fallin announced her chair's initiative, [America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs](#), which spotlights improving education and workforce

training systems and aligning those systems with the needs of individual state economies.

“Improving our workforce and ensuring it remains internationally competitive is an issue that calls for national attention and demands gubernatorial leadership,” Gov. **Fallin** said. “Our future economic security will require significant improvements to our

National Governors Association Gathers in Milwaukee for Summer Meeting

08/02/2013 11:30 AM CDT

Governors to Focus on a Variety of Issues Facing States

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN—Governors joined together in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, today to kick off the National Governors Association’s (NGA) 105th Summer Meeting. NGA Chair Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, Vice Chair Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin, Host Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and members of the NGA Executive Committee welcomed a bipartisan group of their colleagues for three days of meetings.

“These meetings are an opportunity to share experiences and discuss critical issues facing our states,” said Gov. Walker. “While Washington is gridlocked most days, states are not. Governors are focused on finding solutions to our most pressing challenges. I’m thrilled that my colleagues chose Wisconsin to host this meeting.”

The meeting will highlight Gov. Markell’s Chair’s Initiative, A

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Severe Storms

07/24/2013 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 35 Oklahoma counties due to severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding that began Tuesday(executive order attached).

The counties included in the declaration are: **Adair, Atoka, Cherokee, Coal, Craig, Delaware, Creek, Haskell, Hughes, Kay, Latimer, Le Flore, Lincoln, Logan, Mayes McIntosh, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Seminole, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner and Washington.**

“Heavy winds and flooding have lead to damage throughout the state and left many without power, especially in the Tulsa metro,” said Fallin. “Both government and private sector resources are being utilized to help those affected.”

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

Since Tuesday evening, these Oklahoma

Public Assistance Approved for 4 Additional Counties Impacted by May Storms

07/18/2013 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved public assistance for four additional counties impacted by severe storms. The State had submitted a request for assistance in those counties on Monday, July 15.

The designation delivers federal funding for Craig, Haskell, McIntosh and Ottawa counties to assist municipalities, counties, schools and rural electric cooperatives with eligible infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the tornadoes, straight-line winds, flooding and severe storms that occurred between May 18 and June 2.

This brings the total number of counties designated for public assistance to 20, including 16 counties previously declared: Atoka, Canadian, Cleveland, Coal, Hughes, Latimer, Lincoln, McClain, Nowata, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha and Seminole.

Individual assistance is

Governor Mary Fallin Names Two New Cabinet Secretaries, Amends Cabinet Structure

07/16/2013 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of two new cabinet secretaries as part of a larger realignment of her cabinet. Dr. Robert Sommers, the current director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, was named secretary of education and workforce development. Deby Snodgrass, the executive director of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, was named to the new position of secretary of tourism.

Today's appointments came as Fallin made several changes to her cabinet, consolidating some positions to deliver better organizational structure, or creating new ones to reflect her priorities.

Cabinet Reorganization

In an [executive order](#) filed today, Fallin renamed secretary of education, "secretary of education and workforce development." Sommers begins

Secretary of Education Phyllis Hudecki to Step Down from Cabinet Post

07/09/2013 01:15 PM CDT

Cabinet official successfully pushed education reforms, degree-completion initiative

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Secretary of Education Phyllis Hudecki today announced she is resigning from her cabinet level post in order to resume full-time duties as executive director of the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition (OBEC). While serving in the governor’s cabinet, Hudecki had served part-time as an executive for OBEC. The OBEC board of directors has asked Hudecki to lead the organization full-time as it prepares a new agenda designed to support K-12 education professionals and strengthen public schools. Her resignation from the governor’s cabinet will be effective July 15.

During her time on Governor Mary Fallin’s cabinet, Hudecki played a key role in helping to design education reforms aimed at boosting student performance and accountability at public

Governor Fallin Statement Regarding Independence Day

07/04/2013 12:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today made the following statement regarding Independence Day.

“Independence Day is a great time for all of us to reflect on what it means to be an American. It’s especially important for us to remember – and be thankful for -- the men and women in our armed services who are protecting our freedoms around the world and here at home. Their sacrifice, and the sacrifices their families face daily, should make us all proud to be Americans.

“We are blessed to live in a country where freedom and liberty are still valued. I am proud to be an American, and I know that all Oklahomans appreciate the sacrifice and love of country that have enabled us to live in freedom.”

Oklahoma Now: Aerospace Industry Will Continue to Lift Oklahoma Economy

07/01/2013 02:00 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

In Oklahoma, the aerospace industry holds potential for job growth and investment that can lift our state’s economy to even greater heights. Aerospace already is big business in our state and we have a long and rich tradition as a leader in aviation. More than 150,000 jobs are supported by more than 500 aerospace and defense-related companies, and those companies combine to create more than \$12 billion in economic activity each year.

To support that growth, we are taking steps to develop a highly skilled, highly educated workforce capable of filling technically challenging jobs. That’s why we’re emphasizing the importance of STEM - that’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math – at our high schools, colleges and career techs.

We’re also developing unique, one of a kind resources that will make Oklahoma the destination in the United States for one of aerospace’s

Secretary of Environment Gary Sherrer to Resign

06/28/2013 12:30 PM CDT

Cabinet secretary worked successfully on conservation issues, water quality improvement

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Secretary of Environment Gary Sherrer today announced he would step down from his cabinet position by July 1, the end of this fiscal year. Sherrer, a former state representative and a senior administrator at Oklahoma State University, is known by his colleagues as a tireless advocate for Oklahoma's environmental wellbeing and for rural Oklahoma.

"Gary Sherrer is a strong voice for sensible, common-sense policies that have helped to protect Oklahoma's environment while also making room for job growth and economic development," said Governor Mary Fallin. "He has worked well with both Republicans and Democrats and was skilled at achieving consensus among people with diverse interests and agendas. Gary is also a born leader with a passion for service. Whether serving as a combat medic in

Gov. Fallin Announces Federal Assistance Approved for Additional Counties in Wake of May Storms

06/26/2013 04:15 PM CDT

Public Assistance Also Requested for Additional Counties

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the White House has approved disaster aid for Oklahomans in three additional counties impacted by the May tornadoes, straight-line winds, flooding and severe storms. The action grants assistance for residents and business owners in LeFlore, Okfuskee, and Okmulgee counties.

Still under consideration by the federal government is the governor's request for the counties of Garvin, Grady, Hughes, Logan, Tulsa and Wagoner, also to be approved for disaster aid.

"More than 200 homes were damaged by recent storms in the nine counties listed in our request," said Governor Fallin. "While it's great news that Oklahomans in LeFlore, Okfuskee, and Okmulgee counties will now receive personal assistance, we are still hopeful that federal officials will

Grove Sun: International aerospace firm to bring at least 20 jobs to Grove

06/19/2013 09:00 AM CDT

By Kaylea M. Hutson | Posted: Tuesday, June 18, 2013 9:03 pm

The news came as a surprise, but Grove city officials said they are pleased to learn that an Australian company plans to bring at least 20 "highly skilled" jobs to Grove.

Governor Mary Fallin announced Ferra Engineering's plans to open a facility in Grove Tuesday, during the Le Bourget Paris Air Show in Paris, France.

Mayor Marty Follis and City Manager Bill Keefer said they did not learn of the company's decision to open a facility within Grove's Industrial Park, until the governor made her announcement.

"I think this is awesome that an international company is coming in," Follis said. "I think we should say thank you to the powers that be, that brought them here."

Keefer said he was pleased to learn of the expansion.

Journal Record: Ferra Engineering picks Grove for expansion

06/19/2013 08:45 AM CDT

By D. Ray Tuttle, Published: June 18th, 2013

GROVE – Bill Keefer, on the job as Grove city manager for only a few weeks, received a nice surprise on Tuesday.

By phone, *The Journal Record* informed Keefer on Tuesday morning that Australian company Ferra Engineering was planning to expand into Grove.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and Mark Sherrer, Ferra Engineering CEO, had earlier in the day made the announcement at the Le Bourget Paris Air Show that Ferra planned to expand into a new site in Grove.

Ferra Engineering said in a statement that it expects to employ 20 workers at the new site and expects significant growth and expansion opportunities.

"This was a surprise to us at Grove," Keefer said.

After making some calls, Keefer learned that Ferra Aerospace Inc. has had a long-term association with Pride Plating Inc.,

Australian Aerospace Company Ferra Engineering to Expand in Oklahoma

06/18/2013 09:15 AM CDT

Le Bourget, Paris –Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin joined Mark Sherrer, CEO of Ferra Engineering at the Le Bourget Paris Airshow to announce Ferra Engineering's plans to expand into a new location in Grove, Oklahoma. The company expects to employ 20 highly skilled workers at the new site and expects significant growth and expansion opportunities.

"Ferra chose to expand to Oklahoma because its central location enables us to easily provide service to our customer base on both coasts and international markets," said Sherrer. "Oklahoma's competitive cost structure, business friendly environment and strong existing aerospace supply chain made it a natural choice."

“Oklahoma is one of the premiere destinations for aerospace business in the entire world. With the experience, expertise and infrastructure in place, we see the potential for even greater growth,” said Governor

Disaster Declaration Amended to Include May 28 – June 2 Storm Damage

06/12/2013 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The White House today approved Governor Mary Fallin’s request to extend the major disaster declaration issued on May 20 to include the latest round of tornadoes, flooding, straight-line winds and severe storms that occurred in Oklahoma from May 28 through June 2. The governor’s request to include Canadian County for individual assistance was also approved, bringing the number of eligible counties to six.

“Extension of this disaster declaration means that many residents affected by the tornadoes and flooding at the end of May and beginning of June will now be available for individual assistance,” said Fallin. “This is a welcome relief for the hundreds of Oklahomans whose homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. My thanks go out to our partners at FEMA, local and state officials, non-profits, faith-based groups, and all the men and women who have donated time and money to aid in this ongoing recovery

Gov. Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Declaration Include May 28 – June 2 Damage

06/10/2013 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today asked the federal government to extend the major disaster declaration issued on May 20 to include the latest round of tornadoes, flooding, straight-line winds and severe storms that occurred in Oklahoma from May 28 through June 2. The governor also requested the declaration be amended to include Canadian County, bringing the number of counties included to six.

In Canadian and Oklahoma counties alone, more than 538 homes and businesses were impacted by the May 28 - June 2 severe storms. This includes 52 destroyed, 193 with major damage, and 159 with minor damage.

Damage assessments had to be completed by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before a request to extend the disaster declaration could be made. Assessments in some areas were delayed as flood waters kept OEM-FEMA teams from gaining access. Today’s request by the Governor

Gov. Fallin to Lead OK Delegation to Paris Air Show in Support of Job-Creation

06/10/2013 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Science and Technology Secretary Stephen McKeever will lead a delegation of aerospace companies and economic development agencies to participate in the Paris Air Show. The 50th Annual Paris Air Show is taking place June 17-23, 2013. It is expected to attract more than 200,000 visitors and feature over 2,100 exhibitors representing 45 countries. The Paris Air Show is considered to be one of the premiere trade shows in the world.

More than 55 companies with a presence in Oklahoma will exhibit at the show. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, the Tulsa Regional Chamber and the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce will all be represented in the Oklahoma delegation.

The Oklahoma delegation has had great success at aerospace trade shows in the recent past. At last year's Farnborough International Air Show, Fallin announced that Belgium-based ASCO was opening a new \$60 million

Gov. Fallin Signs Executive Order Amending State of Emergency

06/03/2013 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today amended an executive order declaring a State of Emergency to include 25 additional counties impacted by the latest round of severe weather that began May 29. [Click here](#) to view a copy of the Executive Order.

The counties now included in the declaration are: Adair, Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Cleveland, Coal, Comanche, Craig, Creek, Delaware, Garfield, Garvin, Grady, Grant, Greer, Hughes, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Le Flore, Lincoln, Logan, Mayes, McClain, McCurtain, McIntosh, Muskogee, Nowata, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Payne, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Sequoyah, Stephens, Tulsa, Wagoner and Washington.

Since last week, these Oklahoma counties have experienced tornadoes, straight-line winds, flooding and damaging hail. Damage assessments continue in the hardest hit areas, where severe storms have

Monthly Column: Oklahoma Strong: Unbroken in the Wake of Tragedy

06/03/2013 03:15 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

May was a difficult, heart wrenching month for the state of Oklahoma. The lives of at least 40 men, women and children were cut short by tornadoes that ripped through towns and cities. Hundreds were injured, some severely. Almost 4,000 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

In the wake of these terrible storms, we saw suffering and loss. But we also saw something else: an Oklahoma Spirit that would not be broken and would not be defeated.

Resilience. Courage. Compassion. And above all, strength. Those were the defining characteristics of our state and its people at this crucial moment.

It was a time for loss; but it was also a time for hope and for pride in our Oklahoma heroes. First responders rushed to the scene, risking their own safety to pull people out of the wreckage of homes and buildings.

Teachers used their bodies as shields to protect children from falling debris

Oklahoma Awarded up to \$10 Million from U.S. Labor Department for Tornado Recovery Efforts

05/30/2013 04:00 PM CDT

Grant Will Fund Temporary Jobs to Assist in Storm Clean Up

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Oklahoma has been awarded up to \$10 million in National Emergency Grant assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor. An initial \$5 million will be allocated to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) to fund temporary jobs to assist in the clean up and recovery efforts in parts of Oklahoma impacted by severe weather between May 18 and May 20. An additional \$5 million may be available as the state demonstrates a continued need for assistance.

“More than 3,900 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in the recent round of devastating tornadoes that swept across our state,” Fallin said. “State and local efforts to remove debris, clear streets and begin the rebuilding process have been proceeding efficiently. Help from faith-based groups, churches,

Transportation to Sunday Prayer Service Offered to Residents of Communities Impacted by Recent Storm

05/25/2013 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In yet another demonstration of the “Oklahoma Standard,” volunteers have made great efforts to help transport those impacted by the recent storms to Sunday’s prayer service at First Baptist Church in Moore.

The Office of Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, along with other local and state officials who have donated their time and resources, have come together to give every displaced storm victim the opportunity to attend the “Oklahoma Strong: Coming Together in Faith” prayer service.

The governor’s office, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, state officials and local municipal and district officials have worked to finalize transportation to and from the prayer service for storm victims from the communities of Carney,

Wellston, Luther, Chandler, Meeker, Prague, Shawnee, Bethel Acres, Little Axe, Newcastle and Moore.

For those in the Luther, Wellston, Carney, Chandler, Meeker and

Details on Sunday Prayer Service for Victims of May Tornadoes

05/24/2013 04:45 PM CDT

A prayer service entitled, “Oklahoma Strong: Coming Together in Faith,” will be held Sunday, May 26, for the victims of the May tornadoes in Oklahoma. It will be a music and worship service designed to promote healing for the Oklahoma community.

The service will take place at the First Baptist Church in Moore, Oklahoma, located at 301 NE 27th St, Moore, OK. The service begins at 6 PM central.

There is no parking at First Baptist Church. Those who wish to attend the service MUST park at the Crossroads Mall parking lot, located at 7000 Crossroads Blvd, Oklahoma City.

Shuttles will be available, beginning at 4:30 PM, to take members of the public to the service.

First Baptist Church has a capacity of 4,500 people. Seating is first come, first serve. Seating on the ground floor of the church will be reserved for those who were victims of the May tornadoes. Seating for the general public will be in the

Gov. Fallin Signs Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Measures into Law

05/24/2013 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law measures to combat prescription drug abuse in Oklahoma. House Bill 1783, by Rep. Todd Russ and Sen. A.J. Griffin, prohibits a written or oral prescription containing the painkiller hydrocodone from being refilled. Previously, there were no limitations on prescription refills. House Bill 1782, also by Russ and Griffin, permits emergency responders to administer lifesaving medication to counteract a prescription drug overdose.

Earlier in the legislative session, the governor signed into law HB 1781, which allows the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) to access key, non-identifiable information regarding prescription drug use from the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs for research purposes, to identify areas where drugs are being overprescribed and abused in order to aid in the prevention of prescription drug

2013 Legislative and Policy Highlights: Pro-Growth Policies That Move Oklahoma Forward

2013 Legislative and Policy Highlights: Pro-Growth Policies That Move Oklahoma Forward

The 2013 legislative session has been successful and historic. Governor Mary Fallin worked with the Legislature to deliver a fiscally conservative, balanced budget that includes targeted increases for core services, while also cutting taxes for all working Oklahomans. Additionally, she worked with lawmakers to pass landmark reforms in the areas of workers' compensation, government efficiency, mental health, child welfare, public safety, education and more.

Finally, in the wake of the tragic May tornadoes, Governor Fallin worked with legislators to deliver a disaster relief bill that will help municipalities affected by natural disasters to recover and rebuild.

Emergency Relief

The tornadoes that struck several Oklahoma communities in May were devastating. Oklahoma is

Gov. Fallin Applauds Legislature for Passing Emergency Relief Measure

05/23/2013 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the Oklahoma Legislature for passing a bill transferring \$45 million from the state's Rainy Day Fund to the Emergency Fund. The funds will be administered by the Oklahoma Office of Emergency Management and used to reimburse local governments for relief efforts related to natural disasters, including the May 19 and May 20 tornadoes.

"The tornadoes that struck several Oklahoma communities this week were absolutely devastating," said Fallin. "We are currently in an all-hands-on-deck effort to recover and rebuild. My thanks go out to our Legislature for helping to ensure that communities hit hard by storm and tornado damage will have the support they need moving forward. "

Money from the fund will match 12.5 percent of federal dollars spent to reimburse counties, cities, and towns for infrastructure damages that occur under a presidential disaster declaration. It will also

Governor Fallin Thanks President Obama for Announcing Plans to Tour Tornado Damage

05/22/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama’s announced plans to visit Moore, Oklahoma on May 26:

“The state of Oklahoma is experiencing an unimaginable tragedy, but we know we will recover and emerge stronger,” said Fallin. “As we work to rebuild, we appreciate President Obama’s kind words, compassion and his commitment to aid in the recovery effort. I am glad the president plans to visit Moore to see firsthand the terrible damage that has occurred here, to speak with first responders and to visit with the families who have been impacted.”

Governor Fallin Announces Memorial and Prayer Service for Tornado Victims

05/22/2013 03:00 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin today announced that a memorial and prayer service will be held this Sunday, May 26, at the First Baptist Church in Moore, Oklahoma. The service will honor and remember the victims of the May 20 tornado that killed 24 people in Moore and the May 19 tornado that killed 2 in Shawnee. It is open to the public.

“The people of Oklahoma are resilient,” said Governor Fallin. “The grief we are experiencing right now is indescribable. But we have seen tragedy before, and we have recovered and emerged as stronger people and a stronger state.

“This Sunday, I invite the families of those affected by these terrible tragedies, the people of Moore and Shawnee, the state of Oklahoma and all of those who have sent us their thoughts and prayers to attend this memorial service. Together, we can honor those we have lost, pray for those they left behind, and begin to heal together.”

First Baptist Church is located on

Fund Established for Long-Term Needs of Oklahoma Tornado Victims

05/21/2013 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, in coordination with the United Way of Central Oklahoma, has established the OK Strong Disaster Relief Fund to assist with the long-term medical, emotional and educational needs of victims of the May 20 tornado in Moore and the May 19 tornado near Shawnee.

“We are appreciative and grateful for the outpouring of support for our state in the wake this week’s devastating tornadoes,” Fallin said. “The generosity of Oklahomans, Americans and people across the world is very encouraging and will help meet many of the short-term needs of victims. However, experience tells us there also will be long-term consequences to the challenges victims are facing. We

hope the OK Strong Disaster Relief Fund can help meet those long-term needs. I very much appreciate the United Way of Central Oklahoma for their generosity and help in creating this fund.”

Donations for the long-term

Gov. Fallin Announces Federal Assistance Granted for Oklahomans Devastated by Tornadoes

05/21/2013 08:15 AM CDT

Oklahoma City -- Gov. Mary Fallin announced today that the White House has approved the state's request for disaster assistance for five Oklahoma counties hit hard by this week's deadly tornadoes.

The disaster assistance benefits individuals and business owners impacted by the severe storms that occurred May 18 and continuing in **Cleveland, Lincoln, McClain, Oklahoma and Pottawatomie** counties. Gov. Fallin noted with additional damage assessments other counties could be added to the declaration.

The announcement comes in the wake of three days of tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding, which killed more than 50 people and injured more than 120.

“We very much appreciate the support and quick action of President Obama in approving Oklahoma's request for federal disaster assistance in the wake of today's devastating storms,” Governor Fallin said.

To apply for disaster assistance individuals

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, Flooding

05/19/2013 10:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 16 Oklahoma counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding that began Saturday.

The counties included in the declaration are: Caddo, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Garfield, Grant, Greer, Kiowa, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Pawnee, Payne and Pottawatomie.

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

Since Saturday, these Oklahoma counties have experienced tornadoes, straight-line winds, damaging hail and flooding. Initial reports show damage in numerous communities including Bethel Acres, Carney, Edmond, Little Axe, Norman, Shawnee and Wellston. Further damage assessments are ongoing.

“Our hearts and prayers are with those Oklahomans who have been affected by today's severe weather,” Fallin said. “The state of emergency declaration will allow

Fallin Sets 2013 Governor’s Energy Conference for Oct. 9 in Tulsa

05/16/2013 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the third annual Governor’s Energy Conference will be Oct. 9 at the Tulsa Convention Center. The conference annually brings together top policy makers, energy industry executives and other stakeholders from all across the energy industry. This year, the Governor’s Energy Conference will focus on the issues of workforce development and research in the energy industry.

The conference is presented by Governor Fallin and the University of Tulsa Collins College of Business in partnership with the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Tulsa Regional Chamber.

“The productivity and technical expertise of Oklahoma’s energy industry is leading our nation towards energy independence and spurring tremendous economic growth in our state and across the nation,” Fallin said. “At the Governor’s Energy

NewsOK: Governor, officials tell Oklahomans to walk this way

05/16/2013 08:45 AM CDT

By Michael McNutt, NewsOK

Gov. Mary Fallin did more than tell state workers and others Wednesday to develop healthy habits. She led them on a walk around the state Capitol complex.

It's the second year Fallin has led the Governor's Walk for Wellness. About 225 people, mostly state workers, but also agency heads, members of Fallin's Cabinet and some workers from the private sector took part in the walk around the north lawn of the state Capitol.

“We can make a difference in our personal health,” Fallin, wearing an Oklahoma City Thunder T-shirt, told the crowd. “We can make a difference in the state's health.”

Oklahoma made baby steps last year in improving its health rankings by the United Health Foundation: Oklahoma moved up to 43 from 46. Its rankings showed 31.2 percent adults in Oklahoma are physically inactive compared with 26.2 percent nationally; 26.1 percent of Oklahomans smoke

Gov. Fallin Signs Tax Cut into Law

05/13/2013 03:30 PM CDT

Bill Also Includes Funding for State Capitol Repairs

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a landmark income tax reduction bill. House Bill 2032 would cut the top income tax rate from 5.25 percent to 5.0 percent on January 1, 2015. It would cut the rate further, to 4.85 percent, in 2016. Once fully realized, the tax cut would pump \$237 million into the private sector.

Fallin said the income tax cut was an important tool for job creation and economic development.

“One of the first questions I get when I am talking to business owners throughout the country is, ‘if I come to Oklahoma, are you going to raise my taxes?’” Fallin said. “Passing a significant and responsible tax cut will help us to recruit these businesses and retain the ones we already have. Our tax cut will ultimately lead to more job opportunities for all Oklahomans.”

Fallin also

Governor Mary Fallin Acts to Reduce Size of State Government

05/10/2013 02:15 PM CDT

Bills to Eliminate and Consolidate State Boards and Commissions Signed into Law

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law two measures that will eliminate or consolidate 55 boards and commissions within state government. The measures add to previous government “right-sizing” bills backed by the governor. Over 75 boards and commissions have been eliminated or consolidated in this session alone.

HB 1455, by Rep. Jason Murphey and Sen. Greg Treat, eliminates 27 boards and commissions that are defunct, duplicative, or are no longer necessary to include in state statutes. By eliminating travel reimbursements and staff work time on these boards, HB 1455 will save more than \$50,000 annually.

HB 1467, by Murphey and Sen. A.J. Griffin, consolidates 28 boards and commissions into seven new boards that will be overseen by

Gov. Fallin to Lead Walk for Wellness on Wednesday

05/10/2013 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In celebration of Employee Health and Wellness Month, Governor Mary Fallin will lace up her walking shoes again this year to lead the second annual Governor’s Walk for Wellness at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 15. Cabinet secretaries, state agency leaders, state employees and private businesses

will join her in the walk around the Capitol complex. The event serves to raise awareness for worksite wellness programs.

Oklahoma ranks 43rd in the nation in health outcomes, according to the United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings report. Worksite wellness programs can help improve the state's ranking by encouraging employees to eat better, move more and be tobacco free. Worksite wellness programs also benefit employers by reducing healthcare costs and absenteeism, increasing worker productivity and attracting new employees to the business.

"Although our state has made gains in improving our

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Infrastructure Improvement Plan

05/07/2013 02:45 PM CDT

Bill Will Help Address Needs at Capitol, Maintain other State Assets

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 1910, a bill that creates a long-term plan to maintain state assets. The bill, by House Speaker T.W. Shannon and Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman, forms the Long-Range Capital Planning Commission. The commission will first address the repair of the state Capitol, and later develop an eight-year plan to address other infrastructure, repair and maintenance issues. The commission also will provide recommendations on reallocation, reuse or liquidation of state properties.

"It's important we maintain and improve state assets, rather than watching them deteriorate," Fallin said. "House Bill 1910 puts us on a path to ensure state infrastructure and buildings like the Oklahoma Capitol are well-maintained and cared for. My thanks go out to the

Oklahoma Now: 2013 Legislative Session Delivers Pro-Growth Policies That Move Oklahoma Forward

05/06/2013 04:00 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

With a budget deal reached and a flurry of important legislation ready to be signed into law, it is clear that the 2013 legislative session will be a constructive, even historic, time for lawmakers.

On three major fronts, legislative leaders and I have made substantial progress on policies that will bring more good-paying, high-quality jobs to Oklahoma: reducing the state's income tax, overhauling the workers' compensation system and addressing the state's long-term infrastructure needs.

Our income tax reduction plan lowers the state's top tax rate by 0.25 percent, to 5 percent, starting in 2015, and lowers that rate even further, to 4.85 percent, the following year. Once fully realized, our tax cut will pump more than \$200 million a

year back into the private sector. It is a responsible, meaningful tax cut that will let Oklahoma families keep more of their hard-earned money

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Historic Workers' Compensation Reform

05/06/2013 03:15 PM CDT

Bill Reduces Costs to Business, Ensures Injured Workers Treated Fairly

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1062, a bill that reforms the workers' compensation system in Oklahoma. The bill, by Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman and House Speaker T.W. Shannon, seeks to reduce costs for businesses. It moves the state from a court-based workers' compensation system to an administrative system, allowing for more timely processing of claims and reducing the adversarial nature of the process for both workers and employers.

“For decades, Oklahoma has had one of the most expensive and inefficient workers' compensation systems in the country, a constant obstacle for business owners looking to expand operations or create more jobs,” Fallin said. “Senate Bill 1062 completely overhauls our flawed workers' comp system, dramatically reducing the

Journal Record: Oklahoma's first female governor has a history of taking unexpected path

05/06/2013 09:30 AM CDT

Making her own way: Oklahoma's first female governor has a history of taking unexpected path

By M. Scott Carter, Journal Record Capitol bureau reporter

OKLAHOMA CITY – Twice, Mary Fallin has made history. Twice, she changed the world of Oklahoma politics.

In 1994 Fallin, a Republican state representative from Oklahoma City, defied the odds and the GOP establishment and was elected as Oklahoma's first female lieutenant governor. Fallin had served two terms as a state representative before seeking the lieutenant governor's office.

Although she hadn't initially set her sights on a political career, politics seemed to find her.

“I didn't grow up as a child thinking I'd go into politics,” she said. “It never crossed my mind.”

The daughter of two Democrats who both worked for the state, Fallin grew up

Oklahoman: Income tax cut will boost economy, Oklahoma governor says

05/06/2013 08:45 AM CDT

Cutting the personal income tax rate to 5 percent effective in 2015 sends a signal that Oklahoma is serious about tax relief for residents, Gov. Mary Fallin said. The governor plans to sign the income tax-cut measure this week.

By Michael McNutt, The Oklahoman

Cutting the state's top personal income tax rate, a move contained in legislation set to be signed into law this month, sends a strong message to businesses that Oklahoma is serious about providing tax relief for residents and businesses, Gov. Mary Fallin says.

"Lowering our taxes in Oklahoma will absolutely get the attention of businesses, not only here in our state, but businesses across our nation," she said. "It helps us have a competitive advantage.

"It sends a very strong signal that we're not going to be raising taxes upon our businesses or upon our citizens, which makes us more attractive to do business and more attractive as a

Gov. Fallin and Legislative Leaders Announce Budget Deal

05/02/2013 01:45 PM CDT

Budget Holds the Line on Spending for Most Agencies, Provides Targeted Increases to Education, Health and Other Areas

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, House Speaker T.W. Shannon, Senate Pro Tem Brian Bingman and appropriations chairmen in the state Legislature today reached an agreement on a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014. The agreement outlines a fiscally conservative blueprint for state government, holding the line on spending for most agencies while providing targeted increases in resources for education, health, child welfare and infrastructure.

[Click here](#) to view a spreadsheet outlining details of the \$7.2 billion budget. [Click here](#) to view a fact sheet about the budget. Examples

Gov. Fallin to Address Legislators from Across the United States

04/26/2013 01:45 PM CDT

American Legislative Exchange Council Spring Meeting brings together hundreds of state legislators in Oklahoma City May 2-3

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will speak to hundreds of state legislators from across the country on May 3 at the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) Spring Task Force Summit. The two day summit will be held this year at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

Fallin, who was named a "Legislator of the Year" by ALEC while serving as a state representative, will discuss this year's legislative session and highlight the success of pro-growth policies in Oklahoma.

"In Oklahoma, we are working to reduce taxes, limit the size and scope of government, and provide a reasonable regulatory environment for businesses to operate," Fallin said. "By focusing on these policies, Oklahoma lawmakers have helped contribute to remarkable

Fallin, Legislators Announce Agreement on Tax Cuts, Workers' Comp Reform and Infrastructure Plan

04/23/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, Senate Pro Tem Brian Bingman and House Speaker T.W. Shannon today announced agreement and impending action on key legislative items, including income tax cuts, workers' compensation reform and a plan to address long-term infrastructure needs. Three bills were identified as having the support of both the governor and majorities in the House and Senate.

House Bill 2032 would cut the top income tax rate from 5.25 percent to 5.0 percent on January 1, 2015. It would cut the rate further, to 4.85 percent, on January 1, 2016. The second cut is contingent on total revenue growth in FY 2016 being equal to or greater than the FY 2016 fiscal impact of a 0.15 percent tax cut. The bill also provides for a total of \$120 million to fund repairs to the Oklahoma State Capitol.

Senate Bill 1062 reforms the workers' compensation system in Oklahoma. It reduces legal costs, medical costs, and excessive payouts

Gov. Fallin Statement on Oklahoma City Bombing Anniversary

04/19/2013 08:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the 18th anniversary of bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

"On this day 18 years ago, our city was forever changed when 168 lives were taken from us in the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. Today, we remember those who were lost, and offer support to the survivors and the families left behind. We also honor the heroic efforts of the emergency responders, firefighters and law enforcement personnel who worked tirelessly to recover survivors.

“In the days after the bombing, our city came together in a display of strength, unity and resiliency that would later become known as the ‘Oklahoma standard.’ That same spirit has allowed our city to overcome this tragedy and emerge stronger than ever.

“Our hearts also are burdened today as we grieve for the victims of the bombing attacks in

Journal Record: Report: ODVA needs repair, oversight

04/18/2013 02:15 PM CDT

Report: ODVA needs repair, oversight

By M. Scott Carter, Journal Record Capitol bureau reporter

OKLAHOMA CITY – An audit of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs and its seven long-term care centers shows problems with inconsistent training and pervasive substandard wages and raises questions about the way investigations and inspections are performed at the centers, state Auditor and Inspector Gary Jones said Wednesday.

However, ODVA administrators and the nine-member War Veterans Commission have taken some steps to improve the agency, he said.

Done at the request of Republican Gov. Mary Fallin, the performance audit reviewed the operation of the ODVA and its veterans centers. Fallin requested the audit after a yearlong investigation by *The Journal Record* and OETA showed cases of abuse, rape, neglect and deaths at several of the centers.

In the audit, released Wednesday

Gov. Fallin Responds to ODVA Audit, Asking Legislature to Send Her Bills Improving Accountability

04/17/2013 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the statement below in response to an audit conducted by State Auditor and Inspector Gary Jones. The audit was conducted at the request of Fallin. It reported numerous problems at the state’s long term care facilities for veterans.

“My thanks go out to our State Auditor and Inspector Gary Jones, whose hard work will help to guide lawmakers as they seek to improve the services at the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA). Clearly, as this report illustrates, improvements are necessary.

“The audit reveals an unacceptable lack of oversight and accountability at the ODVA, particularly at the state’s seven veterans centers. These shortcomings are particularly disturbing in light of multiple accusations of abuse and neglect aimed at agency staff, some of which may have resulted in the death of Oklahoma veterans.

“In light of the deep-rooted problems at the ODVA, I

Oklahoman: Inherent flaws result in big problems with President Obama's health care law

04/17/2013 09:15 AM CDT

The Oklahoman Editorial | Published: April 16, 2013

IF Obamacare were a product sold on the private market, its makers would already face class-action lawsuits based on the false and misleading claims used to sell it. Virtually *every* promise made about the law has already been broken.

In 2009, President Barack Obama famously declared that “no matter how we reform health care, we will keep this promise: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. Period. If you like your health care plan, you will be able to keep your health care plan. Period.”

But now we know the insurance plans offered through Obamacare's state exchanges will have much more limited provider networks than those offered elsewhere; doctor choices will be restricted. Also, a recent Deloitte Center for Health Solutions survey found that 62 percent of physicians believe it's “likely” that many doctors will retire earlier than

Gov. Fallin Signs School Security Measures into Law

04/16/2013 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed four bills into law designed to improve school security and keep Oklahoma children safe. She was joined at a public bill signing by Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb, who served as chairman of the Oklahoma Commission on School Security, other commissioners, and legislative leaders.

“The state of Oklahoma has a duty to do everything we can to keep our children safe,” Fallin said. “The bills signed into law today will ensure that schools are well prepared for emergencies of all kinds. They’ll also help to provide more training and better coordination between law enforcement and education professionals. These measures could help to save lives. My thanks go out to Lieutenant Governor Lamb, the Legislature, and all the members of the Oklahoma Commission on School Security who worked to develop this legislation and send it to my desk.”

The bills signed today by Fallin included:

AP: Okla. Legislature, governor honor 45th Infantry

04/10/2013 09:30 AM CDT

By SEAN MURPHY, Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The widows of two Oklahoma soldiers killed in Afghanistan were presented Tuesday with the Legislature's inaugural Gold Star Medal during a state Capitol ceremony honoring the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Division.

Jane Horton of Owasso and Megan Ewy of Edmond both received the Gold Star Medal, an award created by the Legislature last year to honor Oklahoma military members killed in combat.

Horton received the honor on behalf of her late husband, Army Spc. Christopher Horton, who was killed in September 2011 in Afghanistan when his unit was attacked by small-arms fire. Ewy's husband, Army 2nd Lt. Jered Ewy, died in July 2011 while conducting a dismounted patrol in Janak Kheyl, Afghanistan.

The two were among 19 Oklahoma National Guardsmen killed in Iraq and Afghanistan since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, said Maj. Gen. Myles Deering,

Tulsa World: Gold Star Medal ceremony for fallen soldiers held at state Capitol

04/10/2013 09:30 AM CDT

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - Jane Horton of Owasso accepted the state's Gold Star Medal on Tuesday on behalf of her late husband, Spc. Christopher Horton, during a joint legislative session honoring the 45th Infantry Division and Oklahoma National Guard.

Sen. Dan Newberry, R-Tulsa, said it was the first ceremony to award the medal to a soldier who lost his life performing a deed of bravery or self-sacrifice during combat after Sept. 11, 2001.

Horton was a sniper who was killed in action Sept. 9, 2011, while serving in Afghanistan with the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Newberry said.

"Spc. Horton was killed when his unit was attacked with small arms fire in Zormat, Paktia Province," he said.

"On behalf of the citizens of the great state of

Federal Government Approves Oklahoma's Request for Winter Storm Aid

04/08/2013 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today the federal government has approved the state’s request for federal aid related to the February 24-26 winter storm.

The declaration delivers public assistance to municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives for eligible infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm.

“Large areas of Oklahoma were inundated with heavy snow in February,” Fallin said. “These funds will provide assistance to help municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives in the affected areas to cover the costs associated with responding to this significant winter storm.”

The counties included in this declaration are: Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Kay, Kingfisher, Major, Noble, Roger Mills, Washita, Woods, and Woodward.

In these counties alone, the storm resulted in an estimated \$7.5 million

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Associate District Judge for McCurtain County

04/05/2013 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Kenneth Farley as the associate district judge for McCurtain County. He is replacing Michael DeBerry, who resigned. Farley will begin service immediately.

Farley of Idabel is a private practice attorney focusing on bankruptcy and real estate litigation. He also represents several communities such as the towns of Idabel, Haworth, Garvin and Wright City. Prior to managing his own practice, he served as the assistant district attorney in McCurtain County from 1983 to 1986.

Farley also served in the U.S. Navy and received an honorable discharge in 1971. For his service, he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and he received a commendation for his service at the U.S. Naval Support Activity in Danang, Vietnam.

“Throughout his career, Kenneth Farley has proven to be an effective and talented professional in both the

GE to Build Oil & Gas Global Research Center in Oklahoma

04/03/2013 10:30 AM CDT

GE to Build Oil & Gas Global Research Center in Oklahoma

\$110 Million Investment to Drive Best-In-Class Technology, Create 125 High-Tech Jobs

- New center to develop innovative technologies in oil and gas sector
- Strengthen GE's Oil & Gas business, capitalizing on \$11 billion in recent investments
- Continued GE investment in U.S. R&D jobs, totaling nearly 2,300 since 2009

OKLAHOMA CITY – General Electric (NYSE: GE) today announced that it will build a new Global Research Center in Oklahoma dedicated to driving innovation and technological advancements in the oil and gas sector and bringing products to market faster. The new facility, which is GE Research's first sector-specific Center, represents a \$110 million investment by the company and will result in the creation of 125 high-tech engineering jobs initially, in

Science and Technology Month Honors Research and Ingenuity in Oklahoma

04/01/2013 05:00 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

Science isn't just in labs. It touches every industry in our state – from agriculture and energy to health care, transportation and manufacturing. Researchers are developing plants that are drought tolerant, bridges with sensors embedded in the concrete to measure stress, and batteries that are microscopic for use in less invasive health equipment.

These are among the fascinating research and products being invented here in Oklahoma. They are of global significance and are happening right here in our own backyard.

These industries also present great potential for economic success in our state. To capitalize on the great work in science and technology related fields already happening here, I have asked the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to develop a data-driven plan that will help us focus our policies on industries that have the greatest potential for wealth generation and job growth.

Governor Mary Fallin Signs House Bill 1999

03/29/2013 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin today signed House Bill 1999, a bill ending the prohibition on horse meat processing for export in Oklahoma. Forty-six states, not including Oklahoma, currently allow horsemeat processing.

Governor Fallin released the following statement:

“In Oklahoma – as in other states – abuse is tragically common among horses that are reaching the end of their natural lives. Many horses are abandoned or left to starve to death. Others are shipped out of the country, many to Mexico, where they

are processed in potentially inhumane conditions that are not regulated by the U.S. government.

“Unfortunately, the 2006 federal ban on horse processing plants has made this situation worse. After the implementation of that ban, the Government Accountability Office reported a 60 percent increase in abused, neglected and starved horses. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has also noted that over 166,000

State of Oklahoma Requests Federal Major Disaster Declaration for February Snow Storm

03/28/2013 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the state of Oklahoma has requested a major disaster declaration from the federal government related to the February 24-26 winter storm.

If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs and costs associated with responding to the storm.

“Areas of Oklahoma were inundated with heavy snow during this weather event, causing widespread infrastructure damage and resulting in significant costs related to emergency response,” Fallin said. “The disaster declaration will provide assistance to help municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives in the affected areas to cover the costs associated with responding to this significant winter storm.”

The counties included in this request are: Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield,

Gov. Fallin Appoints Members to Blue Ribbon Panel to Address Intellectual Disabilities Waiting List

03/21/2013 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today appointed the members of a Blue Ribbon Panel for Developmental Disabilities. Fallin created the panel by executive order, and announced its formation last month at the Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities in Norman.

There are almost 60,000 men, women and children with intellectual disabilities in Oklahoma. Currently, the state has a waiting list of over 7,000 people requesting services from the state's Developmental Disabilities Service Division (DDSD).

The new panel will develop a comprehensive plan to support individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families, starting with recommendations to address the state's growing waiting list for DDSD services. It will also research and analyze best practices for the comprehensive delivery of high quality services.

“Our goal as a state is to be a resource that allows men, women and children with intellectual

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

03/20/2013 08:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to various boards, agencies and commissions.

Board of Trustees for the Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center and Nature Park

Warren Greenlee of Altus is president of NBC Bank in Altus. He is the current chairman of the Oklahoma Arts Institute, and is a past chairman of both the American Bankers Association Agricultural and Rural Bankers Committee and the Oklahoma Bankers Association. Greenlee earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University. He is being reappointed to the board for a seven-year term. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Mary Scott of Mangum is director of federal programs, special education and state testing at Mangum Public Schools. Scott serves as treasurer for both the Mangum

Gov. Fallin Keynote Speaker at Harvard University Conference on Education and Workforce

03/15/2013 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will be among the featured speakers Monday (March 18) at Creating Pathways to Prosperity, a Harvard University conference on education and workforce development. The governor will focus on recent education reforms in Oklahoma such as degree and certificate completion initiatives, the strength of Oklahoma’s career technology centers, and the need to work closely with the business community when designing an educational pipeline that will create a highly skilled workforce.

“For the long-term success of our economy – and our nation – it’s essential we prepare our students and young adults to live productive lives with productive careers,” Fallin said. “Speaking at the Creating Pathways to Prosperity conference is a great way to highlight the education reforms and initiatives that Oklahoma is pursuing to create the highly skilled workforce necessary to grow our

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

03/14/2013 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to various boards, agencies and commissions.

Regional University System of Oklahoma

Lake Carpenter of Leedey is the senior vice president of the Bank of Western Oklahoma. He is the president elect for the Western Oklahoma bankers association and a founding board member of the Leedey Public School mentor program. Carpenter received a bachelor's degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. He is replacing Joe Anna Hibler for a nine-year term. Confirmation from the Senate is required for his appointment.

Board of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Dr. Mary McCaffree of Oklahoma City is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. She currently serves on the board of trustees at the American Medical Association

Gov. Fallin Thanks Legislators for Support of Bill Improving Justice Reinvestment Implementation

03/14/2013 08:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked the Oklahoma House of Representatives for passing House Bill 2042, a bill that would formalize the process of implementing the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI). HB 2042 passed 57-35; it was authored by Rep. Jason Murphey.

JRI was created by HB 3052, which was signed into law by the governor in 2012. It seeks to reduce Oklahoma's incarceration rate by transitioning non-violent offenders with substance abuse problems to drug and alcohol treatment. It also aims to reduce the recidivism rate by providing supervision for those who have been released from prison.

The law also gives courts the option to use a presentence risk and needs-assessments/evaluations to help guide sentencing decisions regarding the most appropriate level of punishment, supervision, and treatment for each offender.

State agencies including the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Attorney

Gov. Fallin Statement in Support of Pardon and Parole Board Members

03/13/2013 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after District Attorney David Prater filed charges against members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board:

“The men and women serving on the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board are community leaders and public servants who deserve to be treated with respect. They are tasked with difficult decisions that have a profound impact on many Oklahoma families and communities. While I may sometimes disagree with their individual

recommendations, I have been thankful to work with board members who take their job seriously and execute their responsibilities faithfully.

“Last year, District Attorney David Prater made several reasonable observations regarding the way the board communicates. I made it clear at that time that I expected improvements to be made, and I am happy to say the board responded, overhauling its website and pursuing a series of changes aimed at improving

Gov Fallin Praises Oklahoma Legislators for Support of Tax Cut

03/13/2013 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin praised the Oklahoma House of Representatives today for passing HB 2032, a bill that lowers the top income tax rate from 5.25 percent to 5.0 percent. Fallin made the proposal in her 2013 State of the State address and included it in her executive budget.

“My thanks go out to the Oklahoma House of Representatives for their support of HB 2032, an important tax cutting measure,” said Fallin. “Reasonably and responsibly reducing the top rate will boost our economy and leave us with the revenue we need to support priorities like education and public safety.

“Lower taxes mean stronger economic growth and more job creation. It’s important for businesses to see that, even as other states and the federal government pursue tax hikes, Oklahoma remains committed to lower taxes and smaller government.”

HB 2032 is authored by Speaker Shannon in the House and President Pro

Gov. Fallin Praises Lawmakers for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Measures

03/12/2013 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today praised Oklahoma legislators for taking action on a series of bills aimed at reducing prescription drug abuse. House Bills 1781, 1782 and 1783, authored by Rep. Todd Russ in the House and Sen. AJ Griffin in the Senate, assist agencies in researching prescription drug abuse in Oklahoma, aid first responders treating suspected prescription drug overdoses and limit access to dangerous prescription pain killers. All three have been passed in the House. Additional prescription drug measures have also been sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Ron Sharp.

“My thanks go out to the Oklahoma Legislature for passing a series of bills that combat prescription drug abuse,” Fallin said. “Eighty-one percent of drug-related deaths in Oklahoma are caused by prescription drugs. Nearly 8 percent of Oklahomans are abusing prescription painkillers, twice the national average. Legislation being worked on this session will help to

Gov. Fallin Signs Compacts with Kaw Nation

03/11/2013 04:30 PM CDT

State, Tribe Ink Compacts on Tobacco, Burn Bans

OKLAHOMA CITY – At a Capitol ceremony today, Governor Mary Fallin and Kaw Nation Chairman Guy Munroe signed compacts concerning tobacco taxes and burn bans.

“We recognize and appreciate the unique cultural and economic contributions of the tribes to our state. My administration is committed to working with tribal government in a productive manner for the benefit of all Oklahomans,” Fallin said. “The signing of these compacts will provide both the state and Kaw Nation with new revenue that will enhance the availability and quality of government services for all Oklahomans, especially the tribal and non-tribal members in north central Oklahoma which the Kaw Nation already serves. I appreciate Chairman Munroe and the Kaw Nation for working with state officials on the signing of these compacts.”

“The Kaw Nation is very pleased to have

Gov. Fallin Celebrates Oklahoma’s National Academy Members of Science, Engineering and Medicine

03/08/2013 09:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commended the works of Oklahoma’s most accomplished scientists, engineers and medical professionals, who will be honored tonight at an event to be held in Tulsa with the members of the National Academies.

This event coincides with the 150th anniversary of the National Academies, which is a private, nonprofit institution that offers expert advice to congress on a wide-range of scientific, engineering and medical issues.

“I would like to congratulate the National Academies on celebrating its 150th anniversary,” Fallin said. “I appreciate everything the Oklahoma delegation to the National Academies does for the state and nation. Their members are providing expert advice on some of the biggest scientific, engineering and medical challenges facing the nation and even the world.”

The event will be held in Tulsa Community College’s Center for Creativity, 909 South

Gov. Fallin Comments on School Security Commission Report

03/05/2013 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on the findings of the Oklahoma Commission on School Security:

“The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary was an unwelcome reminder that we must actively work to address the mental health needs of our state. It also served to remind us of the need to ensure our schools are well-prepared for emergency situations.

“The Commission on School Security has done a good job at addressing those issues and we expect to be able to implement many of its proposals. My thanks go out to Lt. Governor Todd Lamb and the members of the commission for their diligent work to help ensure Oklahoma’s children and schools are kept safe.”

Snuffing Out Secondhand Smoke

03/05/2013 02:45 PM CST

Governor Urges Oklahomans to Sign Up at DontSmokeOnMe.com

By Governor Mary Fallin

In the last two years, Oklahoma has made great strides in improving our overall health. Programs like the Certified Healthy initiatives are promoting healthier workplaces, schools and communities and helping us tackle health problems like obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease.

This year, my budget also includes more money to support prescription drug abuse prevention and treatment initiatives to help citizens overcome the challenges of substance abuse and addiction.

While these programs are working – we’ve moved from 49th in the country to 43rd in terms of health outcomes – there still is much work to be done to improve the health of Oklahoma.

Seventy percent of illnesses in this state are preventable. If we are going to make significant progress

Gov. Fallin Creates Blue Ribbon Panel on Developmental Disabilities

03/05/2013 12:45 PM CST

NORMAN – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an executive order authorizing the creation of a new Blue Ribbon Panel for Developmental Disabilities. The announcement came today during the Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities in Norman, Oklahoma.

The new panel will develop a comprehensive plan to: support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, address the state’s growing waiting list of thousands of individuals hoping to receive services from the state’s Developmental Disabilities Service Division, and research and analyze best practices for the comprehensive delivery of high quality services. The panel will also act in an advisory capacity to the governor on all issues related to providing community services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

“There are nearly 60,000 men, women and children with developmental disabilities in Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “While the

The Oklahoman: Gov. Fallin calls for major overhaul of Oklahoma's pension system

03/04/2013 09:00 AM CST

By Michael McNutt | Published: March 2, 2013

Gov. Mary Fallin is calling for a major overhaul of Oklahoma's pension system, wanting to consolidate the staff, boards and offices of several pension plans into one and change to a defined contribution instead of the traditional plan for new state employees.

“While our state tax-supported bond debt is low, our \$11 billion unfunded pension liability represents 7 percent of our gross state product,” Fallin wrote in state Treasurer Ken Miller's Oklahoma Economic Report that was distributed Friday on the Internet. “That means every Oklahoman is on the hook for \$2,900 in pension debt.”

Fallin said Oklahoma has seven pension plans, six of which have independent boards, staff, offices, consultants and investment managers.

About 220,000 employees and retirees are part of the state's pension system; those covered include teachers, agency workers, police, troopers,

Gov. Fallin Statement on Sequestration

03/01/2013 08:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding sequestration and the looming federal budget cuts to the military and government agencies:

“Oklahoma agencies have had months to prepare for a reduction in federal funds. While it is still unclear how many dollars each state agency will lose, we do not expect an immediate loss in state services. Months ago, I asked my cabinet secretaries and state agency directors to plan ahead for sequestration. We believe the state is well-prepared.

“With that said, it is clear the sequester is creating a chaotic and uncertain environment for businesses looking to invest, state governments tasked with crafting budgets, and those who receive federal benefits or who work for or contract with the government. That uncertainty is bad for the economy and is destroying jobs. Furthermore, the large and seemingly haphazard cuts to military spending reduce the

Governor Fallin Commends Passage of Veterans Reform Bills

02/28/2013 05:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on measures passed by the Oklahoma State Senate to improve service offered at the state’s veteran centers:

“The brave men and women who have served in our nation’s Armed Services deserve nothing but the best. I want to thank Senator Frank Simpson and others in the Oklahoma Senate for their work to reform the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs in order to deliver better services and safer facilities to Oklahoma’s veterans. I look forward to working with the Legislature on additional reforms to the ODVA that will provide every Oklahoma veteran an opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.”

Gov. Fallin To Lead Initiative Petition Drive On Second Hand Smoke Reduction Measures

02/19/2013 01:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced plans to put tobacco regulations aimed at reducing second hand smoke to a vote of the people.

Fallin, who was joined by community leaders and health care professionals at an event hosted by the American Cancer Society, said she would lead an initiative petition drive on the issue. While details of the petition have not yet been finalized, Fallin announced the creation of a new website, www.DontSmokeOnMe.com, where Oklahomans can sign up to receive more information.

Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and approximately 70 that can cause cancer. It causes an estimated 46,000 heart disease deaths and 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States.

“Improving health and wellness in Oklahoma is a priority for me,” said Fallin. “Any plan

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointment of Larry Parman as Secretary of State

02/14/2013 01:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that Larry V. Parman of Oklahoma City will be appointed secretary of state and will begin serving on March 1, 2013. Parman replaces Michelle Day, who has been acting as interim secretary of state since February 1. He will serve as a senior advisor to the governor on policy, economic and legislative issues. The appointment requires the confirmation of the Oklahoma State Senate.

“Larry Parman is a successful and experienced businessman who knows what it takes to create jobs in this challenging economy,” said Fallin. “He will be a great

asset to the state and to my office as we work to develop and implement reforms that improve our business environment and spur private sector growth.”

“My thanks also go out to both former Secretary of State Glenn Coffee and Michelle Day,” Fallin continued. “Both performed their duties enthusiastically and well. I know

The Lawton Constitution: Local Control of Smoking Makes Sense

02/13/2013 09:00 AM CST

Editorial

Gov. Mary Fallin took a courageous stand against what she correctly labeled “Oklahoma’s No. 1” killer in her State of the State address on Monday: Tobacco. Smoking and other tobacco products account for the death of 6,000 Oklahomans each year and cost Oklahomans billions of dollars in increased health care costs and lost workforce productivity. Reducing smoking in Oklahoma is not just a life-and-death issue, it’s a quality of life issue and an economic issue.

To help reduce smoking and the exposure to secondhand smoke, the governor is proposing the restoration of local rights to communities, which would now be able to

NewsOK: Officials offer consolidation of information technology services to school districts

02/08/2013 09:15 AM CST

By Michael McNutt | Published: February 8, 2013

Public school districts would save millions of dollars by hooking up with a state agency to consolidate information technology workers and share in services, Oklahoma's information technology czar told a legislative panel Thursday.

The state has high-speed data transmission lines across the state, which especially would help schools in rural areas where high-speed Internet service is spotty, Alex Pettit, the state's chief information officer, said.

The state Office of Management and Enterprise Services, which has overseen the consolidation of information technology services in state agencies the past couple of years, also has staff in place to perform

Roll Call: Markell and Fallin: Nation's Fiscal Health Depends on Flexible Federalism

02/08/2013 08:45 AM CST

By Govs. Jack Markell and Mary Fallin

States and the federal government are inseparable partners in creating a strong economic future for our country. What affects one partner affects the other. Just as governing a state is vital to the nation's fiscal health, federal decisions are vital to a state's fiscal health.

In January, we delivered this message at the National Governors Association's State of the States Address. While each governor faces his or her own specific circumstances, we all have to facilitate job growth, educate our kids and balance our budgets.

Our state economies are tightly linked to the national economy. We know that with federal spending cuts states will receive less, but it is the uncertainty of how much, from where and when that undercuts our budgets and slows economic growth.

One of the largest uncertainties concerns elements of the fiscal cliff that were postponed or left out of the American

Gov. Fallin Announces Opening of Capitol Wellness Center

02/05/2013 01:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the opening of the Capitol Wellness Center, a new workout facility at the State Capitol that is part of Oklahoma's larger effort to improve citizen health.

"A year ago I ordered the Capitol smoking room closed and a wellness center built in its place as a symbol of our commitment to a healthier, happier Oklahoma. Opening this center today as we begin a new legislative session is real progress we should be proud of," Fallin said. "Staying healthy and fit has obvious personal benefits, but it also has wider benefits to our state and its economy. Healthy workers are more productive and have lower health care costs, which increases efficiency and drives down costs for public and private employers alike."

Secretary of Health Dr. Terry Cline said he expects the Capitol Wellness Center will help improve personal health and lower health care costs for state employees who use

NewsOK: Gov. Mary Fallin seeks personal income tax cut, money for Capitol

02/04/2013 02:45 PM CST

By Michael McNutt | Published: February 4, 2013

Gov. Mary Fallin challenged lawmakers Monday to cut the top bracket of the state's personal income tax, develop a plan to repair the crumbling state Capitol, provide money for earlier public school improvements and let local communities have control over tobacco use in public places.

The governor, beginning her third year in office, also asked lawmakers to overhaul the state workers' compensation system and to continue to back efforts to reduce the

size of state government and increase the number of compressed natural gas vehicles in the state's fleet.

Fallin, in prepared remarks, sprinkled proposals on how lawmakers should appropriate nearly \$7 billion for the 2014

Tulsa World: Fallin calls for tax cut, hikes in education, DHS and mental health budgets

02/04/2013 02:45 PM CST

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin asked lawmakers Monday to lower the state's top income tax rate to 5 percent from 5.25 percent.

She delivered a 50-minute State of the State address to the Legislature assembled in a joint session in the House chamber for the first day of the session.

"This proposal gives us the flexibility we need to ensure that we are reducing taxes responsibly, without starving government," Fallin said. "This is not the last tax cut we will see from my administration.

"I am serious about lowering taxes, and I will work to get our taxes even lower and to help us be more competitive as a state so that our neighbors to the north and to the south that have lower taxes than us won't be taking jobs from the state of Oklahoma."

The cost is expected to be

News 9: Governor Calls For Lower Taxes, More Money For Education In State Of State Address

02/04/2013 02:45 PM CST

By News9.com and Wire Reports

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin is asking legislators to beef up funding for education and state Capitol repairs, while lowering the state's top income tax rate.

The governor outlined her plans during the State of the State Address Monday afternoon at the state Capitol. Her remarks came on the opening day of the Oklahoma Legislature's 2013 regular session.

Fallin asked lawmakers to approve a one-quarter of 1 percent cut to the state's top income tax rate. She wants to reduce the top rate from 5.25 percent to 5 percent. The top rate applies to Oklahomans who earn more than \$8,700 annually.

Fallin's office projects her proposal will cost the state \$40 million in the first year and about \$105 million annually when fully implemented.

Last year, Fallin proposed sweeping changes to the

Governor Fallin, Verizon Officials Announce Company Bringing 500 New Jobs to Tulsa Facility

01/18/2013 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin joined with officials from Verizon in Tulsa today to announce that the company is adding up to 500 new jobs at its North Lakewood facility in Tulsa. The jobs will be finance and accounting positions. The company currently employs more than 900 at the Tulsa facility.

“Today’s announcement is great news for Tulsa and northeastern Oklahoma. These positions represent the kind of high-quality, good paying jobs we are working to bring to the state,” Fallin said. “We appreciate Verizon’s investment in Oklahoma and are excited about the 500 new jobs coming to Tulsa. Today’s announcement is another great example that our pro-growth, pro-business policies are working and are making Oklahoma an even better place to do business.”

Verizon serves local, long distance, wireless and data customers in Oklahoma and has 50 retail stores and authorized agents

The Oklahoman: Drones could launch more jobs in Oklahoma

01/17/2013 08:45 AM CST



Steven Gitlin, vice president of marketing strategy and communications for AeroVironment, holds a drone Wednesday that could be used in law enforcement. Photo by Doug Hoke, The Oklahoman

By Michael McNutt | Published: January 17, 2013

Nearly 600 jobs could be created in Oklahoma, the first state chosen as a testing site

New Study Shows UAS Integration Could Net Oklahoma Nearly 600 New Jobs in First Three Years

01/16/2013 03:30 PM CST

Hundreds, and Perhaps Thousands, More Jobs Could Come to Oklahoma by 2025

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, Secretary of Science and Technology Stephen McKeever and Michael Toscano, president & CEO of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), today unveiled new economic data which finds Oklahoma is poised to create nearly 600 new jobs in the first three years following the integration of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into U.S. airspace. Meanwhile, beyond the first three years, Oklahoma stands to capture hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of additional new jobs by 2025.

The data come from a forthcoming AUVSI-commissioned study examining the national and state-by-state economic impact and job creation potential resulting from the UAS integration into national airspace, which is expected to occur by 2015.

“UAS represents one of the fastest-growing segments of the aerospace industry,

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

01/10/2013 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to various boards, councils and commissions:

Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society

Charles Tate of Ardmore is the president of Hatak Shawi’, a company that performs historical research for the Chickasaw Nation. He was an attorney in private practice before serving as a special district judge in Carter County, from which he retired. He is a member of the Oklahoma Historical Society and a board member of the Arbuckle Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Tate received a bachelor’s degree from Phillips University in Enid and a law degree from the University of Oklahoma. He will serve a three year term and is replacing Ken Rainbolt and represents District Three.

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Scotty Herriman of South Coffeyville is

Oklahoman: Gov. Mary Fallin says states should be partners in federal deficit reduction

01/10/2013 08:45 AM CST



Delaware Gov. Jack Markell and Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin deliver an address for the National Governors Association. Photo by Chris Casteel, The Oklahoman

By Chris Casteel

WASHINGTON — The federal budget wars are creating uncertainty in the states, Gov. Mary Fallin said Wednesday as she urged Congress and President Barack Obama to treat states as partners in the deficit-reduction

Tulsa World: Fallin faults federal fiscal fight in National Press Club speech

01/10/2013 08:30 AM CST

BY WAYNE GREENE World Senior Writer

Lurching from fiscal crisis to fiscal crisis in Washington is damaging the nation and makes the task of governing the states much more difficult, Gov. Mary Fallin said in a Washington speech Wednesday.

"It's hard for us as governors to write a budget," Fallin said in her speech at the National Press Club. "I have been working on my state budget ... (and) it keeps having to be adjusted."

The series of federal budget battles - which is on pace to recur with a federal debt limit fight in March - is damaging the nation, Fallin said.

"That uncertainty hurts our economy. It hurts our jobs. It doesn't help us when we try to plan the different services that we need to deliver in our state," Fallin said.

The "State of the States" speech was delivered along with

National Governors Association Leadership Deliver "State of the States" Address

01/09/2013 11:00 AM CST

Speech Highlights Economy, Education, Health Care and Homeland Security

WASHINGTON—National Governors Association (NGA) Chair **Delaware Gov. Jack Markell** and Vice Chair **Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin** delivered the association's first-ever State of the States address today at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The governors focused on the current conditions and challenges faced by states and discussed the governors' collective vision for 2013. Markell also highlighted several gubernatorial successes from the past year.

"It should come as no surprise how much we can accomplish when we work together. Governors and their federal partners were successful in crafting the command structure so that states and the federal government can respond in natural disasters," Markell said. "We also worked with the first responder community and others to secure needed

Make Getting Fit Your New Year's Resolution in 2013

01/07/2013 12:15 PM CST

Make Getting Fit Your New Year's Resolution in 2013

By Governor Mary Fallin

It's the beginning of a New Year, which means that many Oklahomans have made resolutions and personal goals for themselves for 2013. A lot of those resolutions probably include plans to get in shape and become more physically active.

I know as well as anyone that a resolution made on January 1 can seem daunting by January 31. But if improving your health and the health of your families is one of your goals, let me encourage you not to give up!

Getting fit isn't just important for our personal well being; it's an important pocketbook issue for Oklahoma families and a vital factor in the state's economic wellbeing. Unfortunately, we have a lot of work to do. A new study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* found that Oklahoma is the least heart healthy of all 50 states. Our

NewsOK: Oklahoma governor to deliver states' concerns, priorities

01/07/2013 08:45 AM CST

By Michael McNutt | Published: January 6, 2013

Gov. Mary Fallin, who as vice chairman of a national group of governors met with the president last month, will be back in the nation's capital this week urging Congress and the president not to unfairly slash funding to states in their effort to reduce the federal deficit.

Part of the message Fallin hopes to deliver is that states should be freed from spending mandates if federal budget cuts make them unaffordable, the Republican governor said.

"If they cut spending but yet still require us to maintain the same level of service without the money then they're basically going to be balancing the federal budgets on the states' backs and we don't want that

Governor Mary Fallin Christmas Statement

12/21/2012 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following Christmas statement:

"I want to wish every Oklahoman a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season! As we take time to celebrate with our families and friends this year, I hope we also will reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas and the message of hope and love it carries for us all."

Gov. Fallin Appoints District Judge for Atoka and Coal Counties

12/21/2012 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Paula Inge as district judge for Atoka and Coal counties. She is replacing Richard Branam.

Inge of Atoka has been in private practice since 2011. Prior to managing her own practice, she was a partner at Reasor and Inge Law Offices from 2008 to 2011. Inge

served as chief financial officer for Mathis Brothers Furniture from 1995 to 2007. She also was a partner at Stamper, Otis and Burrage law firm.

“In private practice and in the private sector, Paula Inge has proven to be an effective and talented professional,” Fallin said. “Given her well-rounded experience, I am confident she will serve the state, Atoka and Coal counties well in her new role as district judge.”

Inge earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Oklahoma and a law degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law, where she graduated with

ODOT, OTA Director Gary Ridley Announces He Will Retire in March 2013

12/21/2012 11:15 AM CST

After Retirement, Ridley Will Remain Transportation Secretary in Governor’s Cabinet

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Gary Ridley, who also serves as director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA), announced today that he will retire from both positions in March 2013. Ridley will remain secretary of transportation in Governor Fallin’s administration after his departure from ODOT and OTA.

Ridley has worked with ODOT for 44 years and was appointed director of the agency in August 2001 under Governor Frank Keating. In May 2009, he became secretary of transportation to Governor Brad Henry before adding OTA director to his portfolio in October of that year. Under Fallin, he has continued to serve in all three roles.

“No one has done more for transportation in Oklahoma than Gary Ridley,” said Fallin. “From his start at ODOT in 1965 as an equipment

Gov. Fallin Declares Day of Remembrance in Oklahoma for Connecticut School Shooting Victims

12/20/2012 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has declared Friday, December 21, 2012, as a day of remembrance in Oklahoma for the victims of the Newtown, Connecticut, school shooting. The governor’s proclamation asks Oklahomans to observe the day of remembrance with a moment of silence, reflection or prayer.

Governor Fallin issued the proclamation at the request of Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy, who is asking other states to join Connecticut in observing a day of remembrance Friday for the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

“As Oklahomans, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims, their families and the entire community of Newtown, Connecticut,” Fallin said. “I encourage all Oklahomans to take time to observe this day with a moment of silence,

a moment of prayer or reflection for the families and innocent victims of this horrible tragedy.”

Additionally, the governor encourages

Gov. Fallin Comments on State Revenue Certification

12/20/2012 11:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commented on the Oklahoma Board of Equalization certified revenue figures. According to the board, the governor will have approximately \$7 billion in revenue to craft her budget for fiscal year 2014, an increase of \$214.6 million, or 3.1 percent, from the previous year. However, the governor cautioned that fiscal uncertainty in Washington, D.C., called into question the availability of those funds.

Among the highlights, the figures show that Oklahoma K-12 schools will get an extra \$78.6 million in the next fiscal year through the House Bill 1017 Education Reform Revolving Fund. Additionally, current revenue estimates indicate the state will deposit \$66.4 million into the Rainy Day Fund (RDF), bringing the current balance of \$577.5 million to approximately \$643 million, the largest balance in the fund’s history.

“The certification of an additional \$214 million in revenue is

State Offers Security Seminars for School Officials, Law Enforcement

12/19/2012 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – In the wake of the tragic shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, Governor Mary Fallin is encouraging school officials and law enforcement officers to take advantage of security training seminars offered by the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security.

“Preparing for the worst is the best way to save lives,” Fallin said. “All of us want to do everything we can to keep Oklahoma’s children and schools safe. As school administrators evaluate their emergency response plans and campus security, I want to encourage them to take advantage of the resources and seminars offered by the Oklahoma Department of Homeland Security.”

At the seminars, Oklahoma homeland security officials cover a wide variety of topics with school officials, including the importance of developing, updating and exercising an emergency response plan. Additionally, the training includes instruction for school officials on how to conduct a

Gov. Fallin Appoints Judge Brad Taylor as Presiding Judge of Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Co

12/13/2012 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Judge L. Brad Taylor of Tulsa to serve as presiding judge of the Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Court. Taylor, whom Governor Fallin appointed to the Workers’ Compensation Court earlier this year, replaces Judge Michael J. Harkey as presiding judge on the court.

As part of the landmark workers’ compensation reforms Governor Fallin signed into law in 2011, the governor was required to appoint a new presiding judge to serve a two-year term beginning on Jan. 1, 2013. The Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Court resolves legal disputes involving those injured in the workplace. In addition to presiding over all meetings of the court, the presiding judge also has other supervisory responsibilities relating to such areas as personnel, budgetary and financial management.

“Judge Brad Taylor’s experience having represented both employers and

Oklahoma Improves State Health Ranking

12/11/2012 03:45 PM CST

Oklahoma has improved its state health ranking according to the United Health Foundation, which released its annual “America’s Health Rankings” scorecard today. For overall health, Oklahoma is ranked 43rd in 2012. Over the last several years, Oklahoma’s ranking has ranged from 46th to 49th.

“Today’s rankings show that our efforts to increase access to health care, reduce infant mortality and promote healthy living in schools and workplaces are working. Oklahoma is moving in the right direction, getting people better care with better outcomes,” **said Gov. Mary Fallin.** “Health is such an important issue in Oklahoma because it affects both our quality of life and our economy. For families, poor health can mean personal tragedy and medical bills that break the bank. For businesses, it means lower workforce productivity. That’s why it’s so important to continue this forward momentum. My thanks go

Governor Fallin Announces New Interchange at Radio Road/I-40 in El Reno

12/07/2012 12:00 PM CST

Public/ private sector partnership to fund construction

OKLAHOMA CITY– Governor Mary Fallin today announced the construction of a new interchange at Radio Road and Interstate-40 in El Reno, an area that has become a regional business center for the energy service industry. The project was made possible by a historic partnership between Chesapeake Energy Corporation, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and the city of El Reno. Expected to be complete in 2014, the new interchange is the largest public-private transportation infrastructure project in the state.

“As governor, my number one priority is supporting the creation of good private sector jobs,” Fallinsaid. “To maintain that job growth, we need to continue to improve our transportation infrastructure and ensure that Oklahoma businesses have

access to modern and well maintained roads and bridges. This project is a great example of how the public and

Secretary of State Glenn Coffee Stepping Down

12/07/2012 10:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Secretary of State Glenn Coffee today announced that he will be stepping down to pursue opportunities in the private sector. Coffee has held his current cabinet level position in Governor Mary Fallin’s administration since January 2011. Prior to serving as secretary of state, Coffee was the president pro tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate. Coffee will step down no later than Jan. 31, 2013.

“Serving the state of Oklahoma has been my dream since I was a small boy,” Coffee said. “Being able to serve on such a high level, first as senate president pro tem and then as secretary of state, is truly a dream come true.”

“While I am sad to leave my post in the Fallin administration, I could not be happier with the course that Governor Fallin has charted for the state of Oklahoma. For the last two years I have had the great privilege of helping the governor craft policies that will continue

Oklahoma Watchdog: Fallin tells Obama to liberate the states

12/04/2012 04:30 PM CST

By Patrick B. McGuigan | CapitolBeatOK

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Gov. **Mary Fallin** told President **Barack Obama** the nation’s governors can help solve the federal financial crisis, but they’ll need more authority and fewer directives from **Washington D.C.**

Fallin was among a group of governors who met today with the president, Vice President **Joe Biden** and other administration staffers.

Speaking with reporters in a press call at midday, Fallin said she stressed four points on behalf of the delegation. The focus was the so-called “fiscal cliff,” the looming deadline for automatic budget and tax cuts.

Fallin said federal reforms should “produce savings for both the federal government and states.” She pointed to shared responsibility for running certain programs should also mean “shared savings.” As an example of

Rejecting Federal Health Care Bill Right Thing for Oklahoma

12/03/2012 03:15 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

This past month, I announced Oklahoma would not implement two key components of President Obama’s health care law: the creation of a health insurance exchange

and the expansion of Medicaid. I'm writing this month to let you know why that decision is in the best interests of Oklahoma taxpayers and families.

For several months, my staff and I have worked with other lawmakers, Oklahoma stakeholders and health care experts across the country to determine the best course of action for Oklahoma in regards to both a possible health insurance exchange and the potential expansion of Medicaid.

Our priority has been to ascertain what can be done to increase quality and access to health care, contain costs, and do so without placing an undue burden on taxpayers or the state. As I have stated many times before, it is my firm belief that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) fails to further these goals, and

Gov Fallin Statement on Lesser Prairie Chicken Proposed Listing

11/30/2012 03:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today voiced support for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal not to list the lesser prairie chicken as an "endangered species," and to instead list it only as "threatened." A federal listing of "endangered" comes with more punitive and job-killing restrictions that would harm economic activity like wind power development. In Oklahoma, the state has invested \$26 million since 1996 in conservation efforts in over 563,000 acres in an attempt to protect the lesser prairie chicken.

"Officials in my administration along with other state agencies have been diligently working to conserve the habitat of the lesser prairie chicken while taking into account our desire to create jobs and support industry," Fallin said. "I want to thank the members of my administration who have done a terrific job in representing Oklahoma stakeholders on this issue including

NewsOK: Commerce report demonstrates positive economic recovery in Oklahoma

11/30/2012 09:00 AM CST

By Zeke Campfield, The Oklahoman

Oklahoma's cities and counties continue to recover from the nationwide recession faster than other states, according to a report released this week by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Personal income grew last year in all of the nation's 366 metropolitan statistical areas for the first time since 2007, but the growth rate in Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County was far beyond the national average, according to "Local Area Personal Income, 2009-2011."

Personal income growth was 7.6 percent in the Oklahoma City metro area from 2010-11 and 7.2 percent countywide, compared with an average nationwide increase of 5.2 percent.

The Tulsa metro area saw similar growth, and both Tulsa and Oklahoma City rate increases were among

NewsOK: Students help Oklahoma governor welcome holiday season

11/30/2012 09:00 AM CST

By Michael McNutt, The Oklahoman

The holiday season has arrived at the state Capitol.

Gov. Mary Fallin, with the first gentleman and Santa Claus standing nearby, capped off a day of decorating and festive activities by lighting the state Capitol Christmas tree Thursday evening on the south steps outside the Capitol.

An estimated 1,500 students decorated 36 small Christmas trees throughout the Capitol a couple of hours before more than 2,000 LED lights were lit on the 30-foot-tall artificial tree.

In addition, 100 evergreens in the State Capitol Park were lighted. The trees were donated by the Weyerhaeuser Co. Foundation.

Before the ceremony, Fallin said her Christmas wish for Oklahomans is for everyone to live in peace and happiness.

“My hope is that next year will be even a better year for everyone in Oklahoma,” she said.

Fallin said she and her husband, Wade Christensen, will spend

Gov. Fallin Names David Stewart to Lead MidAmerica Industrial Park

11/29/2012 12:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of David Stewart, a business executive with experience in a variety of enterprises, as chief administrative officer of the Oklahoma Ordnance Works Authority (OOWA), which operates the MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor.

Stewart will be the third administrator of the (OOWA) which oversees the industrial park, succeeding Sanders Mitchell who headed the organization for 35 years before retiring earlier this year. The authority, created as a state beneficiary public trust in 1960, owns and operates the 9,000-acre MidAmerica Industrial Park which is home to operations of nearly 80 companies, including Google, Solae, Airgas, Georgia-Pacific, Red Devil, and others.

“David Stewart is an experienced business leader and Oklahoma is fortunate to have him,” Fallin said. “I appreciate the efforts of the MidAmerica board in conducting an extensive search

Gov. Fallin Thanksgiving Statement

11/21/2012 02:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following Thanksgiving Day statement:

“I continue to be thankful for the opportunity and the honor to serve as Oklahoma's governor, as well as for my wonderful family and friends.

“Like Americans everywhere, I am also thankful that we live in a nation that cherishes liberty and for the brave men and women of our military who protect our freedoms.

“As we approach Thanksgiving Day, I'm wishing all Oklahomans a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday season.”

Gov. Fallin Announces Addition of CNG Vehicles to ODOT Fleet

11/20/2012 04:15 PM CST

Transportation Department Adds ¾-ton Pickups, Compact Sedans as Part of Governor's CNG Initiative

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley today announced the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) has added 160 compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles to the department's statewide fleet. The vehicles will primarily be used by field division offices across the state. The department has four Honda Civics, which are ready for use by the agency, and 156 three-quarter ton Dodge Ram pickups, which the agency expects to receive in January and put into use immediately.

“Converting our state fleets to CNG will not only save millions in taxpayer dollars in fuel costs, but it promotes the use of a cleaner burning fuel made in the United States and the creation of American jobs,” Fallin said. “I appreciate the leadership of Secretary Ridley

Governor's Statewide Food Drive Exceeds Goal

11/19/2012 04:00 PM CST

Drive provides much-needed meals for hungry Oklahomans

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin's third annual Feeding Oklahoma Food and Fund Drive ended Thursday with a record-breaking amount of donations. The drive exceeded the goal of raising 1.2 million meals to help feed hungry Oklahomans this holiday season with more than \$359,611 donated and 823,278 pounds of food collected. The month-long effort will provide more than 2.6 million meals.

“I am continually overwhelmed by the support and generosity shown by Oklahomans in all 77 counties, and this year's food drive proves to be no different,” Fallin said. “I want to especially thank all the sponsors and the caring people of this state who donated their time and resources to help feed our neighbors in Oklahoma. Oklahoma

is a great place because of its people. Their support of this food drive will ensure more Oklahoma families have a better

Gov. Fallin: Oklahoma Will Not Pursue a State-Based Exchange or Medicaid Expansion

11/19/2012 11:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement announcing that Oklahoma will not pursue the creation of a state-based exchange or participate in the Medicaid expansion in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA):

“For the past few months, my staff and I have worked with other lawmakers, Oklahoma stakeholders and health care experts across the country to determine the best course of action for Oklahoma in regards to both the creation of a health insurance exchange and the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Our priority has been to ascertain what can be done to increase quality and access to health care, contain costs, and do so without placing an undue burden on taxpayers or the state. As I have stated many times before, it is my firm belief that PPACA fails to further these goals, and will in fact decrease the quality of health care across the United States while contributing to the

Newly Elected Governors Join Veteran Governors for Seminar

11/17/2012 12:00 PM CST

Bipartisan Meeting Will Focus on Transition from Campaigning to Governing

SAN DIEGO, CA—Veteran governors welcomed governors-elect this weekend for an executive-style retreat to help them prepare for service as state chief executives during the National Governors Association (NGA) Seminar for New Governors.

The two-and-a-half day biennial seminar brings together governors fresh off the campaign trail and assists in the transition from running for office to governing their states. The seminar runs from Friday, Nov. 16, through Sunday, Nov. 18.

“It is an honor to work with such a diverse and talented group of governors from across the country,” said NGA Chair Delaware Gov. Jack Markell. “We will be working together advocating before the federal government and developing best practices policy solutions for states. At the Seminar for New Governors, we take off our partisan hats and get down to the business of

Governor Fallin Veterans Day Statement

11/11/2012 11:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement concerning Veterans Day 2012:

“My sincerest and deepest thanks go out to every man and woman who has worn the uniform of the United States Military, as well as their families. These are

Oklahoma's true heroes, and we will never forget their dedication, service and sacrifice."

"This Veterans Day, I'm asking all Oklahomans to join me in remembering and honoring these great individuals. If you see a veteran, thank them for their service. Pray for those who are today serving in the military, as well as their families. Let us all take a moment to reflect on how lucky we are to live in a country for which so many have sacrificed so much to protect."

Veterans Day 2012: Honoring All Who Served

11/05/2012 03:15 PM CST

By Gov. Mary Fallin and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Maj. Gen. (Retired) Rita Aragon

For more than 350 years, brave men and women have worn the uniform of the United States Military in order to defend our freedom. These heroes have answered our nation's call and served with honor and dignity. In return for their service, they deserve our respect, our gratitude and our profound appreciation for their dedication and sacrifice. That's why, at the Oklahoma Capitol, working for our veterans continues to be a top priority. We can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to our veterans, but we can continue to pursue policies that recognize and honor their service.

Honoring our veterans starts with making sure they are properly equipped to do their job. That's why we have personally visited Oklahoma National Guard facilities and troops preparing for deployment to ensure they have the best equipment and training

Gov. Fallin Announces Appointment of Jonna Kirschner as New Department of Commerce Director

11/02/2012 09:30 AM CDT

Dave Lopez Will Step Down But Continue Work as Secretary of Commerce on Fallin's Cabinet

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Jonna Kirschner as the director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC). Kirschner, who served as deputy director of the agency, will replace Dave Lopez, who is resigning as ODOC director but will remain secretary of commerce in the governor's cabinet.

"I want to thank Dave Lopez for his creativity, dedication and leadership as director of the Department of Commerce," Fallin said. "He has served as an enthusiastic and effective advocate for the state of Oklahoma as we work to grow our economy and build a more prosperous state. He will be missed in the day-to-day operation of the Commerce Department, but we will continue to rely on his expertise as secretary of commerce in my cabinet."

Lopez said that

Gov. Fallin Reappoints Preston Doerflinger as Director of OMES

11/01/2012 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today reappointed Preston Doerflinger as director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES), formerly the Office of State Finance. Doerflinger resigned in March as OMES director in order to serve as interim director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) at Fallin’s request.

With the recent selection of Ed Lake as permanent DHS director, Doerflinger is returning to his post at OMES. Doerflinger’s reappointment requires confirmation from the Oklahoma State Senate. During his absence, Transition Project Manager Carol McFarland served as acting OMES director. Doerflinger remained secretary of finance on the governor’s cabinet during his time at DHS.

“I want to commend Preston Doerflinger for his service as interim director of DHS,” Fallin said. “Preston helped guide DHS during a critical time when key reforms, such as the Pinnacle Plan,

Fallin Praises Community Services Initiative for Intellectually & Developmentally Disabled

11/01/2012 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today praised the Oklahoma Human Services Commission for its vote to complete the state’s transition from institutional care to community services for Oklahomans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The commission oversees the Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) of the Department of Human Services (DHS). Earlier today, the commission passed a resolution directing that Oklahoma’s two state-run institutions for persons with developmental disabilities, the Southern Oklahoma Resource Center (SORC) in Pauls Valley and the Northern Oklahoma Resource Center in Enid (NORCE), be closed over the next two to three years. Residents of these facilities will be transitioned to community living arrangements, an option that provides greater flexibility for people with disabilities and is already being used by over 5,000 Oklahomans.

“The vast majority of Oklahomans currently receiving assistance

Gov. Fallin Issues Reminders Regarding New Open Carry Law

10/31/2012 11:45 AM CDT

Gun Owners who Open Carry Must Have a Handgun License

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today reminded citizens who plan to take advantage of Oklahoma’s “Open Carry” law to study the law and remain in compliance. Under the new law, which goes into effect tomorrow, November 1,

citizens with a handgun license issued by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) will now be able to carry both concealed handguns and openly displayed hand guns. Previously, license holders were only able to carry concealed weapons.

“Oklahoma will soon become one of 44 states that allow some kind of ‘open carry,’” Fallin said. “I believe the law is consistent with the spirit of the Second Amendment and that similar laws in other states have shown that open carry can be implemented safely and responsibly. However, it is important that citizens, especially those that plan to openly

Oklahoma Sending Resources to Assist Hurricane Sandy Recovery

10/30/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) announced today that Oklahoma is sending a 10-person operations support team to the state of New York to assist in the Hurricane Sandy recovery effort. The team includes personnel from OEM, the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety and the city of Tulsa. The Oklahoma delegation will help support the state of New York Emergency Operations Center.

The team is deploying in response to an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request from New York State Office of Emergency Management. OEM is monitoring additional requests from the affected areas. Fallin has also reached out to other governors whose states have been hard hit by Hurricane Sandy. Where Oklahoma can meet assistance requests, further support is expected to be deployed.

“Oklahoma is a generous and giving state and we are happy to provide whatever support and

Gov. Fallin Comments on Endowed Chairs Funding for Oklahoma Colleges and Universities

10/19/2012 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today commended the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, which officially approved the transfer of appropriated funds to reduce the backlog in the state’s matching funds program for endowed chairs at their meeting Thursday.

The Regents’ Endowment Fund Program, created in 1988, is a one-to-one matching program for state and private donations to fund academic positions and other related projects, mostly in the areas of science, technology and math, at Oklahoma’s public colleges and universities.

Due to the popularity of the program and the amount of private contributions raised, the state had recently fallen behind in matching contributions, resulting in a backlog of \$282.3 million. During the 2012 legislative session, Governor Fallin signed into law Senate Bill 1969, which authorized the transfer of \$141.9 million to reduce the backlog in the endowed chairs program.

“The

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Passing of Ray Ackerman

10/17/2012 03:15 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the death of Ray Ackerman:

“Ray Ackerman will always be remembered for his civic leadership, unique business savvy and service to his country while serving in the Navy for 35 years.

His contributions went beyond starting the largest and oldest advertising agency in Oklahoma, Ackerman dedicated his life to promoting Oklahoma City.

His work with the Oklahoma River will be his lasting legacy and now with a statue recognizing his longtime advocacy will allow his work to live on forever.

My heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to his family in their time of grief.”

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Statement on Audit of American Indian Cultural Museum

10/17/2012 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – A statement from the office of the governor:

“Governor Fallin asked for an audit of the Native American Cultural and Educational Authority (NACEA) earlier this year to help decide the best way to move this American Indian Cultural Center and Museum project forward.

The audit makes it clear that the NACEA needs to be operated more efficiently and effectively than it has been in the past. There are many factors that have lead to these outcomes and the delays in the project’s completion have in turn wasted taxpayer resources due to increased materials costs, as well as delaying the generation of revenue.

However, with the addition of new leadership last year, Governor Fallin feels the NACEA has begun to correct many of the issues addressed in the audit.

Moving forward, it is important for the Legislature, NACEA leadership and all stakeholders to work together to ensure that this project, which the state

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Selection of New DHS Director

10/15/2012 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the selection of Edward Lake as the new director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services

(DHS). The DHS Commission announced Lake's selection at a board meeting on Wednesday.

Lake of Hendersonville, Tenn., served as deputy commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services from 1992 through 1996 and then again from 2003 through 2011. He also served as an assistant commissioner at the department from 1996 through 2003. During his career in Tennessee, he served at almost every level of the Tennessee Department of Human Services including as a child welfare caseworker, both a county and regional director and as an administrator.

"I applaud the selection of Edward Lake as the next director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services," Fallin said. "With experience at nearly every level of the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Ed

Governor Fallin Appoints Kathleen Elliott to Oklahoma Board of Examiners in Optometry

10/12/2012 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Dr. Kathleen Elliott of Broken Arrow to the Oklahoma Board of Examiners in Optometry.

Elliott is a pediatric optometrist in Tulsa. She is also an adjunct professor at Northeastern State University (NSU) college of Optometry in Tahlequah.

"Dr. Elliott has impeccable credentials and years of experience that make her an ideal appointee," Fallin said. "The state of Oklahoma will benefit from her service."

Elliott is the first female doctor to be appointed to the Oklahoma Board of Examiners in Optometry. Her father, Dr. George Foster, previously served on the board for 12 years and was first appointed by former Governor George Nigh and then reappointed by former Governors Henry Bellmon and David Walters. This makes them the first father-daughter combination to serve on the board.

"It is an

Gov. Fallin Kicks off Feeding Oklahoma Food & Fund Drive

10/11/2012 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today kicked off her third annual Feeding Oklahoma Food and Fund Drive, which begins on Oct. 15, with the goal of raising 1.2 million meals to help feed hungry families, children and seniors this holiday season. The month long food and fund drive will benefit the [Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma](#), the [Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma](#), and their partner agencies across the state.

"Time and again, Oklahomans prove to be the most caring and giving individuals in the nation," Fallin said. "Last year, Oklahomans from all 77 counties came together and donated well over one million meals during the holiday season. This year, we can do even more for the hungry in our state."

According to the USDA, Oklahoma ranks as the fifth-hungriest state in the nation, with more than 675,000 Oklahomans

Gov. Fallin to Lead Oklahoma Delegation on Economic Development Trip to Europe

10/09/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will lead a delegation of business and civic leaders from northeastern Oklahoma on an economic development trip to Europe from October 15 – October 19. The trip, organized by the Tulsa Metro Chamber, will include meetings with senior executives at companies with employment or operations in Oklahoma. Officials from the Tulsa Metro Chamber and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce will also attend.

The trip will provide an opportunity for the governor and business leaders to encourage expansion and retention of jobs and investment from those foreign-based companies operating in Oklahoma. The companies with which the delegation will meet represent key industries in Oklahoma including the aerospace, energy and manufacturing industries. In 2011, Oklahoma exports totaled \$6.2 billion. Oklahoma's exports increased 41 percent from 2009 to 2011, marking the third-consecutive year of significant export

Gov. Fallin Appoints Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) Board Member

10/05/2012 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Allen Wright to the GRDA board of directors. He is replacing David Chernicky, who resigned.

Wright of Edmond is the vice president of public and government affairs for Devon Energy. Prior to working for Devon, he was the director, chief operating officer and vice president at Koch Industries.

Wright previously worked as an assistant to former Governor Henry Bellmon, an administrative aide to then-Corporation Commissioner J.C. Watts and as chief of staff for Congressman Frank Lucas.

"Allen is a successful businessman who has always been engaged in his community," Fallin said. "I know he will make an excellent and engaged board member at the GRDA."

Wright serves on the Public Affairs Council National Board of Directors. He is also involved with Habitat for Humanity, serves as a board member for the Ronald McDonald House, Oklahoma City

Gov. Fallin Lifts Statewide Burn Ban

10/04/2012 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today lifted the statewide governor’s burn ban currently in effect for 33 Oklahoma counties effective immediately.

“With cooler temperatures and higher humidity we are seeing a lower occurrence of wildfire,” Fallin said. “These factors combined with recent precipitation across the state allow the ban to be lifted.”

Oklahomans are encouraged to remain cautious with campfires, debris burning, outdoor cooking, welding and other activities that include an open flame.

“Even with the rains we have received, drought conditions are still plaguing some counties”, said State Forester George Geissler. “Everyone should be weather aware and consider the conditions before they do any activity which could spark a wildfire.

Cimarron County remains under a county burn ban at this time. County commissioner burn bans can change frequently. Citizens are

Governors Fallin and Hickenlooper Announce Results of Successful 22 State CNG Vehicle Initiative

10/04/2012 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper today announced the preliminary results of a multistate solicitation designed to encourage auto manufacturers in the U.S. to develop more functional and affordable compressed natural gas vehicles.

Fallin and Hickenlooper are leading a bipartisan group of 22 states seeking to use CNG vehicles in their state fleets.

The two governors announced the start of the project one year ago, at last year’s Governor’s Energy Conference in Oklahoma City. Since then, Fallin and Hickenlooper have petitioned other states and governors, met with automobile manufacturers in Detroit, and issued a Request for Proposal soliciting bids for more affordable CNG vehicles for use in state fleets. After receiving the support of 20 other states, they announced the preliminary results of the initiative at today’s conference.

“The initiative has been enormously

In Case You Missed It: ACEEE: Mass. Still #1 State for Energy Efficiency, OK Among Most Improved

10/03/2012 12:00 PM CDT

2012 Energy Efficiency Scorecard Top 10 Also Includes MT, SC CA, NY, OR, VT, CT, RI, WA, MD, and MN;

States Most in Need of Improvement Are NE, LA, MO, KS, AK, SD, WY, WV, ND, and MS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 3, 2012): States continue to move strongly in 2012 to advance energy efficiency initiatives regardless of which political party is in control of state legislatures and governors' offices, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) on the release today of its sixth annual State Energy Efficiency Scorecard.

Available online at

Governor Fallin Appoints District Judge for McCurtain, Choctaw and Pushmataha Counties

10/03/2012 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Michael DeBerry to the 17th Judicial District Office of McCurtain, Choctaw and Pushmataha Counties. He is replacing Willard Diesel, who is deceased.

DeBerry of Idabel is the Associate District Judge in McCurtain County. He has served in various roles, including assistant district attorney, associate district judge, half- time assistant district attorney, municipal judge for the city of Idabel, first assistant district attorney and as a self-practicing attorney.

“Judge DeBerry is a lifelong resident of McCurtain County who has worked in the legal field in both the private and public sectors,” Fallin said. “With his experience, I am confident he will serve the state well in his new role.”

DeBerry is a current member at the Idabel Chamber of Commerce, VFW, Masons, American Legion and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation. He was also recognized in 2011 as an

Governor Fallin Encourages Oklahomans to Wear Purple to Support Domestic Violence Victims

10/02/2012 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY– Governor Mary Fallin, the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (OCADVSA), Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) and Verizon Wireless Oklahoma are encouraging Oklahomans to wear purple Thursday, October 4th to show support for victims of domestic violence and to raise awareness of this rapidly-growing crime.

"Domestic abuse is a tragedy that we will work as a community to overcome," Fallin said. "I applaud OCADVSA, YWCA, DVIS and Verizon Wireless Oklahoma for raising awareness of this issue within our state. I encourage all Oklahomans to show their support for the victims of domestic violence by wearing purple on Thursday, October 4."

Wear Purple Day in Oklahoma will take place on Thursday, October 4 and is one of the public awareness events planned in October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). The color purple was

Oklahoma is taking the Lead in Move Towards Energy Independence

10/02/2012 08:15 AM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin's "Oklahoma Now" Column

By Governor Mary Fallin

This Thursday, energy industry experts, executives and employees will join public officials at the Governor's Energy Conference in Oklahoma City. They will represent virtually every sector of the energy industry, including oil and natural gas, wind and solar power, biofuels and nuclear energy.

While these men and women come from diverse backgrounds and fields – academic, corporate and political – they all have two things in common: they are on the cutting edge of one of the most important job creating industries in the world; and they are leading the charge towards American energy independence.

For decades, energy independence was thought to be out of reach. New drilling techniques like hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, the discovery

Gov. Fallin Removes 22 Counties from Burn Ban

09/28/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Due to recent rains, Governor Mary Fallin signed a proclamation removing 22 counties from the Governor's Burn Ban, effective immediately. Thirty-three counties remain under a state-issued burn ban and another three counties are under county commissioner bans.

"The long term forecast shows continued drought conditions through much of the state where the ban remains in effect, but the risk of wildfire has lessened in several areas, allowing us to reduce the burn ban coverage," said Fallin. "We are hopeful that rains will continue across the state to allow further reduction of the ban."

Counties to remain under the Governor proclaimed burn ban are: Beaver, Bryan, Carter, Cimarron, Comanche, Cotton, Ellis, Garfield, Garvin, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Haskell, Jackson, Jefferson, Kay, Kiowa, Latimer, Le Flore, Love, Marshall, Murray, Noble, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Pontotoc, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, Washita, Woods and

Governors Fallin, Hickenlooper to Announce 22-State Bipartisan CNG Vehicles Award

09/28/2012 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper will announce the results of a multistate solicitation designed to encourage auto manufacturers in the U.S. to develop more functional and affordable compressed natural gas vehicles. Fallin and Hickenlooper are leading a bipartisan group of 22 states seeking to use CNG vehicles in their state automobile fleets.

Earlier this year, both governors [travelled to Detroit](#) to meet with automakers about the project. In July, the states issued a request for proposal soliciting bids for compressed natural gas sedans, pickups, and vans to be used in state fleets.

On Thursday, Oct. 4, Fallin and Hickenlooper will announce the preliminary results of that effort at the Governor’s Energy Conference held at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Announces Federal Assistance Appeal Approved for Cleveland County

09/27/2012 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appeal for disaster aid for Cleveland County has been approved by the federal government, making individual assistance available to residents and business owners affected by this summer’s wildfires.

Oklahoma and Payne counties again were denied federal assistance.

“I am pleased the federal government has accepted our appeal and finally decided to provide help to Cleveland County,” Fallin said. “Unfortunately, the White House has once again denied aid to Oklahoma and Payne counties. Having visited wildfire damage in all three locations and seen families left with no home and businesses burned to the ground, I continue to believe the residents of Oklahoma and Payne counties are deserving of federal aid. The state of Oklahoma will continue to look for ways to provide assistance to the victims of wildfires, regardless of which county the live in.”

The August

Gov. Fallin to Host National Energy Leaders for Southern States Energy Board Meeting

09/21/2012 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin will host key policy makers and energy industry leaders from across the nation in Oklahoma City for the 52nd annual meeting of the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB). Governor Fallin serves as chairman of the SSEB. The annual meeting, which runs from Sept. 23-25, will bring together experts in diverse disciplines offering policy and technology solutions. The theme of the annual meeting is “Toward Energy Independence.”

“The SSEB is a key leader in the effort to promote the traditional energy resources that are needed and utilized by Oklahoma and other states every day,” Fallin said. “To ensure our energy security and to create jobs and grow the economy, we must

expand domestic energy production and become less reliant on foreign sources of energy.”

Governor Fallin will deliver the chair’s message at 8:30 a.m. Monday. The event is

Gov. Fallin Visits NORCE Facility

09/17/2012 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today made an unannounced visit to the Northern Oklahoma Resources Center of Enid (NORCE) to get a firsthand account of the operation and care delivered at the facility. Last week, the governor made a similar visit to the Southern Oklahoma Resources Center (SORC) in Pauls Valley.

During the visits, the governor spoke with administrators, staff and clients, toured the property, got an update on the condition of the facilities and was given a briefing on the types and quality of services provided to clients. Later this year, the Department of Human Services Commission is expected to consider a proposal to determine the future of both facilities.

“For the clients of NORCE and SORC and their families, it’s important we work to provide them the best care possible,” Fallin said. “Visiting these facilities in person gives me a greater understanding and firsthand knowledge about

Gov. Fallin Appoints Bernard Jones to Oklahoma County Judicial Post

09/17/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Bernard Jones as Oklahoma County District Judge. He is replacing Judge Tammy Bass LeSure.

Jones of Edmond previously served as associate dean for admissions and external affairs at Oklahoma City University (OCU) School of Law. Prior to joining OCU, he was an associate at the Oklahoma City law firm of McAfee & Taft where he focused on labor and employment issues. He also served as an associate at Porter Wright Morris and Arthur, an Ohio law firm in Ohio.

“As an attorney in private practice and as a member of the OCU School of Law faculty, Bernard Jones has proven himself as a talented and skillful attorney committed to upholding the law,” Fallin said. “Additionally, he is a civic leader in our community dedicated to helping others. These qualities ensure Bernard Jones will serve the state well during his time as an Oklahoma County district

Twenty-Two Counties Removed from Governor’s Burn Ban

09/17/2012 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed an executive order removing 22 counties from a statewide Governor Burn Ban that has been in place since August 3. Fifty five counties remain under a state-issued burn ban. The change in the Governor Burn Ban is due to improving wildland fire conditions and comes at the request of Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

The Governor’s Burn Ban is now in effect for Adair, Alfalfa, Beaver, Blaine, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cherokee, Cimarron, Comanche, Cotton, Craig, Custer, Ellis, Garfield, Garvin, Grady, Grant, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Haskell, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnston, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Latimer, LeFlore, Logan, Love, McIntosh, Major, Marshall, Mayes, Murray, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Pontotoc, Rogers, Sequoyah, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, Wagoner, Washington, Washita, Woods and Woodward Counties.

Fallin thanked

Gov. Fallin to Hold Town Hall Meeting on OSU-Tulsa Campus

09/17/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that she and members of her Cabinet will be holding a Town Hall Meeting and lunch open to the public, on Wednesday, September 26. The event will take place at the OSU Tulsa Campus and begin at 11:30 AM (details below). Topics will include issues important to Tulsa and Northeast Oklahoma, including education, the development of Oklahoma’s high tech jobs sector, transportation infrastructure, and more. A question and answer session will follow remarks from Fallin and select cabinet members. A free lunch will be provided to those attending the meeting.

“Town Hall meetings are a great way for me to update Oklahomans on the work we’re doing for them at the State Capitol, as well as an important opportunity to listen to their questions and concerns,” Fallin said. “I’m looking forward to our event in Tulsa, and I invite anyone interested in state government to come to the

Gov. Fallin to Host Energy Conference in Oklahoma City

09/14/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Leading energy industry officials as well as key policy makers will gather in Oklahoma City on Thursday, Oct. 4, for the Governor’s Energy Conference, Governor Mary Fallin announced today. The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cox Business Center in Oklahoma City and is presented by the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and the Meinders School of Business, and sponsored by the Karl F. and June S. Martin Family Foundation.

“States like Oklahoma are leading the way when it comes to energy policy. This conference brings together industry leaders as well as key policy makers to discuss the future of American-made energy and the path forward to energy independence,” Fallin said. “I encourage all those who are interested in energy policy to attend.”

The conference features input and presentations from leading oil and natural gas industry executives, and other

Gov. Fallin Statement on Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks

09/11/2012 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the anniversary of the September 11 attacks:

“Eleven years ago today, our nation mourned as thousands of lives were lost in the 9/11 attacks,” Fallin said. “Today, let us pause to remember the innocent victims who were killed in the attacks, as well as their family and friends. Let us also honor the thousands of firefighters, police officers and first responders, as well as those aboard Flight 93, whose heroic actions saved countless lives.

“While our nation has not experienced an attack on our soil since that day, we must remain vigilant against those who would support tyranny over liberty and seek to do us harm. We appreciate the men and women of our Armed Forces for their service and sacrifice in the effort to keep us safe from our enemies.”

The Oklahoman: Septemberfest delights visitors to Oklahoma Governor's Mansion

09/10/2012 09:15 AM CDT

By Zeke Campfield | Published: September 9, 2012

Nothing tempers the chill of partisan politics like a Saturday afternoon of sunshine and family — even when it's the governor who plays host.

Well, perhaps seeing a unique swimming pool also would be nice.

For Carson Kardokus, 9, at Septemberfest with his mom, dad and two younger brothers, nothing short of both would do the trick.

“He wants to see the swimming pool because it's apparently shaped like the state of Oklahoma, or at least that's what we heard,” said Kardokus's mother, Shannon, who corralled her sons into Gov. Mary Fallin's mansion for a quick tour. Her youngest son, Creed, carried a stuffed Clifford the Big Red Dog under his arm.

Earlier that morning, Fallin read a story to the boys and other children out on the mansion lawn, Shannon Kardokus said. A petting zoo, inflatable toys and

Gov. Fallin Invites Oklahomans to Septemberfest at Governor's Mansion

09/05/2012 09:00 AM CDT

Free event runs 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 8

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen today announced the 16th annual Septemberfest will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion and the Oklahoma History Center. The event is free and open to the public and features a variety of activities for the entire family.

“An Oklahoma fall favorite, Septemberfest is a great way to spend time with the whole family,” Fallin said. “I invite all Oklahomans to come out to the Governor’s Mansion and enjoy the great entertainment we’ve assembled. Wade and I are really looking forward to meeting people from all over the state and welcoming them to this wonderful Oklahoma event.”

Sponsored by the Friends of the Mansion, Septemberfest is a celebration

Exemptions Added to Statewide Burn Ban

09/04/2012 11:00 AM CDT

Burn Ban Remains in Effect Due to Continued Wildfire Danger

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that exemptions have been added to the statewide burn ban, although the Governor’s Burn Ban continues to remain in effect. The decision was made in consultation with Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, and based on existing wildfire fuel conditions and ongoing drought.

“I understand the length of this burn ban has made it difficult for some, particularly our agriculture producers,” said Fallin. “Therefore, exemptions are being added to allow for the use of fire under very specific, controlled conditions. Existing exemptions, including those related to grilling, road construction, welding and oilfield operations, will remain in place.”

Under the amended burn ban,

State of Oklahoma, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Sign Tobacco Compact

08/24/2012 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief George Tiger today signed a tobacco compact between the state of Oklahoma and the Creek Nation. The compact signed today includes the settlement of a lawsuit filed by the Attorney General’s Office regarding the sale of tobacco. The compact will result in payment of \$11.5 million and dismissal of litigation by the state and the tribe. The agreement allows for a five-year term for settlement of payments.

“The state of Oklahoma values the financial, economic and cultural contributions of its Indian tribes,” Fallin said. “This compact between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the state of Oklahoma resolves past disputes and marks a new spirit of partnership between the state and the tribe.

“I want to thank Chief George Tiger for his leadership in resolving past disputes and appreciate the spirit of cooperation exhibited by him and

Governor Fallin Very Disappointed With Lack of Federal Assistance for all Wildfire Victims

08/24/2012 08:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin was notified today in a letter from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate that assistance for individuals and business owners impacted by recent wildfires in Cleveland, Oklahoma and Payne counties has been denied. The letter (see attachment) states “it has been determined that the damage to the dwellings from wildfires in Cleveland, Oklahoma and Payne counties was not of such severity and magnitude to warrant the designation of Individual Assistance for these counties.” Today’s decision comes on the heels of yesterday’s announcement that Creek County was approved for individual assistance.

“I am extremely disappointed in FEMA’s decision to deny disaster assistance to all Oklahomans who have been tragically impacted by these fires,” said Governor Fallin. “It seems ridiculous to me that houses lost in fires occurring within the same period, on the

Governor Fallin Announces Federal Assistance Approved for Creek County in Wake of Wildfires

08/23/2012 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the White House has approved disaster aid for Oklahomans impacted by recent wildfires. The action grants assistance for residents and business owners in Creek County.

Still under consideration in Washington, DC is the governor's request for the counties of Cleveland, Oklahoma and Payne, which also sustained significant damage and were part of the governor's initial request. Despite the declaration's failure to be inclusive of the governor's complete request, all those who have sustained wildfire damage since July 28 are urged to call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or

go online at www.disasterassistance.gov and go ahead and report their damage. This will help bolster the case for additional counties to be added to the declaration.

"I am happy to see the federal government has approved our request for assistance in Creek

Gov. Fallin Appoints Brian Goree to the Court of Civil Appeals

08/20/2012 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Brian Goree to the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals District 6, Office 2. Goree will replace Judge Carol Hansen, who has resigned.

Goree has practiced law for more than 20 years, focusing on litigation research and writing. He previously worked as the head of research and writing at Latham, Wagner, Steele and Lehman in Tulsa, a civil defense law firm. Goree also worked as an associate attorney at Secrest, Hill and Butler. He has been practicing law since 1989.

"With more than 20 years experience in litigation research and writing, Brian Goree brings to the court a great knowledge of the law," Fallin said. "I am confident Brian will serve the state well in his new role as a judge on the Court of Civil Appeals."

Goree is a volunteer with Tulsa Lawyers for Children. He is a past chairman of the Appellate Practice Section

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints two Members to the Commission for Human Services

08/17/2012 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointments of Pam Kanaly and Karen Waddell to the Commission for Human Services. The Oklahoma Commission for Human Services is a nine-member governing board for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). Its members are appointed by the governor to staggered nine-year terms, with one membership expiring each August. These appointments fill all current vacancies on the OKDHS Commission.

"The ongoing reforms at the Department of Human Services – including the implementation of the Pinnacle Plan – are essential in our efforts to improve child welfare services," Fallin said. "Both Pam Kanaly and Karen Waddell are respected and successful community leaders with a great deal of experience working with families and children. I know both are ready for the challenge and committed to serving on the Commission in order to help the agency to better protect and

Governor Mary Fallin Asks All Oklahomans to be Proactive and Protect against West Nile Virus

08/16/2012 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin is joining with state and local public health officials to raise awareness of West Nile virus and the steps Oklahomans should take to protect themselves from the mosquito-borne illness.

“West Nile virus is a serious disease that can be life-altering or even fatal,” said Fallin. “Many of our fellow Oklahomans are now hospitalized with West Nile virus. Even though we are early into the season, at least 61 cases and three deaths have been reported in Oklahoma. The best way to prevent West Nile virus is to avoid mosquito bites.”

Fallin urged Oklahomans to “fight the bite” by taking personal precautions to reduce the risk of mosquito bites, including using insect repellent when going outdoors, installing or repairing screens on windows and doors, and emptying standing water from items outside the home like buckets, cans, flower pots, and tires so mosquitoes have no place to

\$3.87 Million in Grants Awarded to Rural Fire Departments Statewide

08/10/2012 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Forestry Services Division today announced the agency has distributed more than \$3.87 million in operational grant funds to 863 rural fire departments across the state.

Funded by the Oklahoma Legislature and authorized by Fallin, these grants assist departments located in communities with a population of less than 10,000 people and can be used for a range of needs.

“With wildfires having devastated huge portions of the state in the last several days, many rural fire departments are low on resources and in need of help,” Fallin said. “These grants will help replace broken equipment and supply firefighters with the resources they need to do their jobs safely. We support our firefighters 100 percent and stand behind them as they work to protect Oklahoma families and communities from the threat of

Auto Manufacturers Converge in Oklahoma to Discuss CNG Vehicles for State Fleets

08/08/2012 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Representatives from the nation's auto manufacturers, including the Big Three, are in Oklahoma City today to meet with Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and procurement experts to ask questions surrounding a recently issued multistate request for proposal.

The RFP, which comes as a result of a nationwide, bi-partisan effort led by Fallin and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, asks the nation's auto manufacturers to

produce affordable and functional compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles for use in state automobile fleets.

As of today, 22 states have joined the RFP, indicating their intention to purchase CNG vehicles for use in state fleets.

With 123,000 CNG vehicles in the nation, and 1,000 fueling stations, the governors hope that this new commitment will help overcome the obstacles, including limited infrastructure and consumer demand, which may be holding automakers back from producing a wider variety of CNG

During Wildfire Crisis, Oklahoma Standard Emerges Once Again

08/07/2012 12:45 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

The month of August started like the month of July ended: hot, dry and windy. In other words, the conditions were perfect for wildfires.

Difficult summers, however, are something we're used to. In response to the weather and in anticipation of wildfires, I placed all 77 counties under a State of Emergency due to drought. When dozens of fires broke out across the state, Oklahomans were prepared.

Because of the statewide emergency declaration, state and local governments were able to make emergency purchases and immediately begin protecting their communities. And although they couldn't stop the fires that spread across the state—especially those that may have been started maliciously and intentionally

Fallin Calls for Audit of Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

08/06/2012 08:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested that Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector Gary Jones conduct an operational audit of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA). The request (see attached letter) comes following the announced resignation of ODVA Executive Director Martha Spear. It is Governor Fallin's policy to request an audit following the resignation of an agency head in order to help the transition to new leadership and to highlight possible areas of improvement.

Fallin's letter asks the state auditor to:

- Review the efficiency and effectiveness of management
- Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the oversight of the operations of Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs
- Review the reasonableness of the expenditures of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs
- Review the expenditures of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

Governor Fallin Urges Donations to Red Cross and Salvation Army

08/06/2012 08:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – With almost 80,000 acres in Oklahoma burned by wildfires and hundreds of Oklahomans displaced from their homes, Governor Mary Fallin is urging those who wish to aid in relief efforts to make donations to the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Both organizations are active in disaster relief and are providing assistance to first responders and wildfire victims in Oklahoma.

“In the past few days, countless Oklahomans have reached out to my office to ask how they can help first responders and those who have lost their homes to wildfires,” Fallin said. “While there are many opportunities to offer assistance, two of the most reliable and effective aid groups continue to be the Salvation Army and the Red Cross.”

“As I’ve travelled across the state, I’ve seen their volunteers handing out water and food to firefighters and helping families in need. For those Oklahomans who want to offer their assistance

Governor Issues Statewide Burn Ban

08/03/2012 10:45 AM CDT

Oklahoma City - As drought conditions continue to worsen across Oklahoma, Governor Mary Fallin has announced that a ban on outdoor burning for all 77 Oklahoma counties is effective immediately.

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, recommended the ban based upon an analysis of fire activity, wild land fuel conditions and the predicted continued drought. The governor's statewide burn ban supersedes all county burn bans currently in place and remains in place until conditions improve and it is removed by the governor.

"Extreme heat and ongoing drought have created conditions very conducive to wildfires," Fallin said. "A statewide burn ban is now necessary to reduce the risk of preventable wildfires and to protect lives and property.

"Moving forward, we need the public to be extremely vigilant. Lit cigarettes, flat tires and cars parked in dry grass can quickly

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions

07/30/2012 04:00 PM CDT

Board of Health

Tim Starkey of Alva is the chief executive officer at Great Salt Plains Health Center in Cherokee. Prior to that, he served as CEO of Memorial Hospital of Texas County in Guymon. He is president of the Oklahoma Primary Care Association. Starkey received a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma Panhandle State University and a master's in business administration with an emphasis in health care management

from the University of Phoenix. He is replacing Alfred Baldwin, Jr. and will serve in position 4 on the board.

Board of Pharmacy

Jim Spoon of Sand Springs is a pharmacist and owner of Spoon Drug in Sand Springs and T Roy Barnes Drugry in Tulsa. He is a past president of the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association, a board member of the Pharmacy Providers of Oklahoma and a committee member of the National Association of Community

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Drought

07/30/2012 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to extreme or exceptional drought conditions.

“Extreme heat and dry conditions continue to affect the entire state,” Fallin said. “My administration will be ready to help provide whatever aid and assistance it can as Oklahoma communities work to cope with this drought.”

The Executive Order allows state agencies to make emergency purchases related to disaster relief and preparedness. It is also a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

Under the executive order, the state of emergency lasts for 30 days. It can be amended at a later time based on conditions on the ground.

[Click here to see a copy of the executive order.](#)

Due to drought, 47 Oklahoma counties have declared countywide burn bans.

Gov. Fallin Statement on Approval of DHS Pinnacle Plan

07/25/2012 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today released the following statement after the Department of Human Services (DHS) received endorsement today from child welfare experts on the Pinnacle Plan, an improvement plan for the state’s child welfare system:

“The approval of the Pinnacle Plan is a big step forward for the state and for DHS as it works to strengthen child welfare services. My thanks go out to DHS employees and the co-neutrals for their hard work and cooperation, as well as Oklahoma legislators for making the necessary financial commitment to support these important reforms. Moving forward, DHS will continue to have my support and assistance as it works to implement the Pinnacle Plan. The success of these reforms is critical to ensuring the state can provide adequate protection and care to vulnerable Oklahoma children.”

Journal Record: Fallin: State going strong

07/25/2012 09:00 AM CDT

By D. Ray Tuttle, The Journal Record
Posted: 09:18 PM Tuesday, July 24, 2012

TULSA – State officials remain engaged with American Airlines officials as the company works its way through bankruptcy, Gov. Mary Fallin said on Tuesday.

Fallin delivered an informal State of the State address to more than 800 people in downtown Tulsa for the Tulsa Metro Chamber.

“We remain in contact with American Airlines,” said Fallin, who met with reporters afterward. “We want to help American in any way we can. We want American to be successful and keep as many jobs in Tulsa and Oklahoma as possible.”

State officials are examining areas in which the airline might be eligible for incentives, she said.

This month, two union work groups with the Transport Workers Union Local 14 reached agreements on proposed contracts with American Airlines. The contracts with

Gov. Fallin Appoints Oklahoma County District Judge

07/24/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Tim Henderson to the seventh Judicial District Office of Oklahoma County. He is replacing Judge Daniel Owens, who resigned.

Henderson of Edmond is a partner at Huddleston, Piker, Henderson and Parker, a law firm dealing in civil and criminal defense litigation, employment law, family law, insurance settlement, personal injury, probate and estate law and workers compensation. He was an associate at Holloway Dobson and Bachman law firm from 1994 to 1996. Henderson also served in various roles, including assistant district attorney, in the district attorney’s office in Oklahoma County from 1986 to 1994. Prior to that, he served as a police officer for the Edmond Police Department from 1981 to 1986.

“Mr. Henderson’s background as both a police officer and an attorney makes him well qualified for this new role,” Fallin said. “He will do an excellent

Gov. Fallin Comments on Drop in Oklahoma Unemployment Rate

07/20/2012 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin commented today on the latest figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) that showed Oklahoma’s unemployment rate has dropped yet again. For June, the unemployment rate was 4.7

percent, 0.1 percentage points lower than May and 1.4 percentage points lower than June 2011. Nationally, the unemployment rate is 8.2 percent.

Jobless rates were lower in 11 states (including Oklahoma), higher in 27 states, while 12 states saw no change, according to the BLS. [Click here](#) for more information from the BLS.

“Oklahoma’s low unemployment rate continues to outpace the national unemployment rate and is proof our pro-business policies are succeeding in creating a positive business environment for job creation and investment,” Fallin said. “Moving forward, we must maintain our

Gov. Fallin, State Leaders to Visit Detroit to Pitch CNG Vehicle Initiative to U.S. Automakers

07/13/2012 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, Oklahoma Secretary of Energy Michael Ming, and Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce Dave Lopez will visit Detroit on Monday to pitch a multi-state, bi-partisan compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicle initiative to U.S. auto manufacturers.

In April, Gov. Fallin and the governors of 12 other states [sent letters to auto makers in the United States](#) expressing their commitment to explore ways to purchase more CNG vehicles for their state fleets. The move is both a cost-saving measure for states and a means to incentivize the manufacture of affordable and functional CNG vehicles. The letter referred to a multi-state Request for Information (RFI), asking manufacturers to provide background and information in anticipation of a multi-state solicitation later this summer. Participating states

Gov. Fallin Names Wes Lane New Chairman of DHS Commission

07/11/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Wes Lane as chairman of the Department of Human Services Commission.

The governor appointed Lane to the DHS Commission in September and since then he has served as chairman of a DHS Commission special subcommittee to review cases of child abuse and neglect.

“Since his appointment to the DHS Commission, Wes Lane has proven himself a dedicated advocate for Oklahoma’s children and our most vulnerable citizens,” Fallin said. “In his new role as chairman of the DHS Commission, I expect Wes to continue to work toward implementing reforms at DHS – including the Pinnacle Plan to improve the child protection system – that will help improve the agency and the services it provides.”

Lane is president of the Burbridge Foundation, a foundation dedicated to solving problems that impact families. He served for 21 years in the

Gov. Mary Fallin Names Jacque Secondine Hensley as Native American Liaison

07/10/2012 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Jacque Secondine Hensley of Tulsa as Native American liaison within the governor’s office. In 2011, legislation eliminated the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission and established the executive branch position of Native American liaison.

The Native American liaison serves as an advisor to the governor on Native American affairs with areas of responsibility as designated by the governor including monitoring compacts between Oklahoma and tribal governments, monitoring consultations and interactions between state agencies and tribal governments, as well as continuing the outreach between the governor’s office and tribal governments.

“Oklahoma’s tribes have a valuable and unique impact on Oklahoma’s economy and our culture,” Fallin said. “My administration has always worked closely with Oklahoma’s tribes and will continue to do

Gov. Fallin to Attend National Governors Association Meeting

07/10/2012 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin will join governors from around the nation in Williamsburg, Virginia for the annual National Governors Association (NGA) meeting from July 12-15. Gov. Fallin serves on the executive committee of the NGA.

The NGA meetings will feature sessions on topics like health care, economic development, education and workforce as well as public safety, veterans’ affairs and homeland security. Throughout the meeting, governors will attend “Governors-Only” sessions, which provide an opportunity to discuss issues states are facing in a private, off-the-record setting.

“Economic growth and job creation are important priorities for the nation’s governors. Attending the NGA meetings offers me the chance to highlight the legislative successes in Oklahoma that are helping us create jobs and bring in new investment,” Fallin said. “These meetings also offer a chance to discuss

Governor Mary Fallin Appoints Megan Simpson as Harper County Associate District Judge

07/09/2012 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Megan Simpson as an Associate District Judge in Harper County. She is replacing Judge G. Wayne Olmstead, who resigned.

Simpson of Clinton is currently the assistant district attorney in Custer County and previously had the same position in Texas County. She has experience with felony jury trials, including first-degree murder cases. Simpson has been practicing law

since 1995 where she was in private practice. She also served as a contract attorney for the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System, covering all indigent defense services for Woodward and Ellis counties. Simpson has tried approximately 65 criminal cases in her career.

“Megan’s experience in civil litigation, criminal defense and prosecution will help her immensely in the new role of associate district judge,” Fallin said. “I am confident she will serve the state well during her time on the

Oklahoma Selected for New Asco Inc. Aerospace Manufacturing Site

07/09/2012 09:30 AM CDT

Belgian Aerospace Component Manufacturer Announces New Production Facility in Stillwater, OK

OKLAHOMA CITY – Today Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary Dave Lopez of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, announced that Belgium-based Asco Incorporated will be opening a new U.S. production facility in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Asco is a technology specialist and world-class provider of supply chain integration in design, development, precision machining, processing, and certified assembly of complex high strength metallic aircraft components. Asco specializes in lift devices, mechanical assemblies and major functional components for the aerospace industry.

“Oklahoma was the best location for our facility, said Christian Boas, CEO Asco Group. “ The state is centrally located in North America and has an existing aerospace industry which is thriving. Oklahoma has a highly skilled workforce which specializes in our industry and the

Gov. Fallin to Showcase Oklahoma Aerospace, Defense and UAV Sectors in Farnborough Airshow

07/02/2012 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Science and Technology Secretary Stephen McKeever will lead a delegation of seven Oklahoma Aerospace companies to the Farnborough International Air Show, taking place in Farnborough, UK, July 9-13, 2012. (Governor Fallin will attend the air show on July 9 and July 10.) Officials from the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, the Tulsa Metro Chamber and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) will also attend.

The Farnborough International Airshow is one of the largest aviation events in the world. The show is estimated to attract more than 130,000 visitors, and will be attended by approximately 70 trade delegations from more than 40 different countries. An estimated \$47 billion in business orders are expected to be announced during the event.

The companies exhibiting in the Oklahoma booth are SW United Industries (Tulsa), M&M Manufacturing (Tulsa), Enviro Systems (Seminole), Pro-Fab

Governor Mary Fallin Announces New Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program in Oklahoma

06/28/2012 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined officials from the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) and the Oklahoma National Guard in announcing that Oklahoma has been chosen as the test site for the DHS Robotic Aircraft for Public Safety (RAPS) Program. The program will research and test Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS), focusing on possible applications for first responders, including search and rescue scenarios, response to radiological and chemical incidents and fire response and mapping.

Work is expected to begin this fall at Oklahoma State University’s Multispectral Lab (UML) test site near Lawton, Oklahoma. The program will be operated by UML and takes advantage of the restricted airspace around Fort Sill, a U.S. military base also near Lawton. The Oklahoma National Guard will be a key partner with both DHS S&T and the UML as the RAPS program develops.

RAPS is

Gov. Mary Fallin Statement on Supreme Court Ruling on Health Care

06/28/2012 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act:

“Oklahomans have voiced their opposition to the federal health care bill from the very beginning, having approved a constitutional amendment to block the implementation of this bill in our state. We believe that, rather than Big Government bureaucracy and one-size-fits-all solutions, the free-market principles of choice and competition are the best tools at our disposal to increase access to health care and reduce costs.

“I’m extremely disappointed and frustrated by the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the federal health care law. President Obama’s health care policies will limit patients’ health care choices, reduce the quality of health care in the United States, and will cost the state of Oklahoma approximately a half

Governor Fallin and Top Officials Discuss Emergency Management and Homeland Security Risks

06/21/2012 08:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and members of her cabinet joined emergency management and homeland security representatives yesterday to discuss Oklahoma’s capability to plan for, prevent, respond to and recover from catastrophic events.

The event was designed specifically for state government leaders, featuring scenario-based roundtable discussions tailored to include all facets of state government. It also emphasized the state's ability to manage hazards and the importance of continuing essential services during and after a large-scale disaster.

"We do an exceptional job with emergency management in Oklahoma, but this was an opportunity for the state's top officials to re-examine our existing protocols and procedures while also anticipating the potential challenges a catastrophic disaster may bring," Fallin said.

The training event included discussions on critical pre-disaster planning, use of the

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

06/15/2012 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today announced appointments to the board of regents for Redlands Community College, Oklahoma City Community College, Tulsa Community College, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, Seminole State College, Northern Oklahoma College, Western Oklahoma State College, Carl Albert State College, Murray State College and Eastern Oklahoma State College. The governor also announced appointments to the board of the Regional University System of Oklahoma, the board of Langston University-Oklahoma City and Langston University-Tulsa, and the board for the McCurtain County Higher Education Program. The appointments all were confirmed by the state Senate during the 2012 legislative session.

Board of Regents for Redlands Community College

Jim Kitch of Yukon owns Oklahoma Tag of Yukon. He is the current president of the Oklahoma Tag Agent Group. Kitch previously served as mayor and on the Yukon City

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

06/14/2012 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today announced appointments to the State Board of Corrections, the Judicial Nominating Commission, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation Commission, the Crime Victims Compensation Board and the Oklahoma Board of Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors. The appointments were confirmed by the state Senate during the 2012 legislative session.

State Board of Corrections

Kevin J. Gross of Tulsa is president and chief executive officer of the Hillcrest Healthcare System in Oklahoma. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Tulsa Metro Chamber of Commerce and is a board member for the Oklahoma Hospital Association. Gross earned a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a master's of business administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is replacing Robert Rainey and will serve as an at-large member of the board.

QMI Agency: Oklahoma says OK to Keystone pipeline

06/14/2012 09:00 AM CDT

By Bill Kaufmann, QMI Agency

CALGARY -- Oklahoma's governor directed a blast at U.S. President Barack Obama Tuesday for holding up a Keystone XL Pipeline she argues will greatly benefit her state.

During a two-day visit to the Global Petroleum Show, Republican Mary Fallin said the president is ignoring the importance of the oil industry to the U.S. and states like hers.

"The president doesn't understand the magnitude of the energy sector and how it can generate strength in the economy," Fallin said during a visit to the Oklahoma government pavilion on the Calgary Stampede grounds.

Obama has turned down approval of the pipeline's leg between the Canadian border and a terminus at Cushing, in northeastern Oklahoma, largely over environmental concerns.

But he's given the green light to its southern leg, between Oklahoma and the Gulf Coast, whose refineries would receive Alberta crude

The Oklahoman: Gov. Mary Fallin touts ties between Oklahoma, Canada

06/13/2012 09:00 AM CDT

By Jay F. Marks, Oklahoman

CONKLIN, Alberta — Gov. Mary Fallin has only been in Canada for a couple of days, but she's already noticed many similarities between her state and the province of Alberta.

Oklahoma and Alberta are home to about the same number of people, with economies stronger than the rest of their countries and a wealth of natural resources, including abundant oil and natural gas reserves, she said.

Fallin, who will speak Wednesday at the Global Petroleum Show in Calgary, spent much of Monday touring Alberta's oil sands. The trip included a visit to Oklahoma City-based Devon Energy Corp.'s Jackfish operation.

She said the trip helped her understand the connection between Oklahoma and Canada, with state companies lending their expertise to the development of a massive resource base in Alberta.

"It all comes back to benefit Oklahoma," the governor said, pointing to figures from the

CBC News: Calgary's Global Petroleum Show attracts thousands

06/13/2012 09:00 AM CDT

By CBC News

Roughly 60,000 delegates from around the world have come to Calgary for the the Global Petroleum Show.

On Tuesday night, several hundred people attended a reception where Premier Alison Redford made a quick speech.

"I'll say to some of our international visitors that as part of a stable democratic nation that values free enterprise and economic protection we believe that Alberta has successfully used innovation and technology to build our province and to build our energy sector," she said.

As much of the crowd continued to chat and visit, Redford talked about how energy has been key to economic development in Alberta and the rest of Canada. She says the energy sector can be relied upon to build a strong and stable economy.

The premier says Alberta has always welcomed innovators and investment.

"We know that this show that allows people to connect to each other here in Alberta, across

Gov. Fallin, Boeing Officials Open New OKC Facility

06/07/2012 04:30 PM CDT

Boeing Bringing More than 1,000 Jobs to Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined officials with The Boeing Company to open the company's new Oklahoma City facility. The newest facility will be home to Boeing's avionics modernization programs for the B-1 and C-130 aircraft, as well as the B-52, E-4B, E-6, C-32 and C-40. Additionally, Boeing is bringing more than 1,000 new jobs to the Oklahoma City facility.

"The opening of the new Boeing facility and the addition of more than 1,000 new jobs in Oklahoma City will be a great boost for the local and state economy," Fallin said. "We're confident the new facility will be a great success, and will continue the long and successful relationship between the state of Oklahoma and the Boeing Company."

"Oklahoma appreciates the aerospace industry and its hardworking employees. At the Capitol,

Gov. Fallin to Showcase Oklahoma Energy and Aerospace Sectors in Canada

06/06/2012 11:00 AM CDT

Trade Mission will Help Drive Foreign Direct Investment to Oklahoma and Create Jobs

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, along with Oklahoma Energy Secretary Michael Ming, will lead a delegation of eight Oklahoma oil and gas companies to the Global Petroleum Show (GPS), taking place in Calgary, Canada, June 12-13, 2012. Officials from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) will also attend.

The Oklahoma companies exhibiting at GPS in Oklahoma's booth are Everest Sciences, Pipeline Equipment and Kline Tools, from Tulsa; Double Life and Performance Manufacturing, from Oklahoma City; Continental Wire, from Jenks; King Oil Tools, from Enid; and TechTrol, from Pawnee.

Governor Fallin will also tour the oil sands and Devon's Jackfish projects. She will speak to industry leaders including CEOs of major energy companies about the proposed Keystone pipeline expansion that would extend from Cushing, Oklahoma

Gov. Fallin Accepts Resignations of DHS Commissioners Steven Dow and Anne Roberts

05/30/2012 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today accepted the resignations of Commissioners Steven Dow and Anne Roberts of the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services.

The resignations were offered after a letter by the Oklahoma Ethics Commission identified a conflict of interest concerning Dow's simultaneous service as both a DHS commissioner and chief executive officer of the Community Action Project, a charitable corporation which operates daycare and child education facilities. Roberts, although not named in the Ethics Commission letter, resigned to address a potential conflict between her service as a commissioner and her employment with Integrus Health.

Governor Fallin said she valued the service of both Dow and Roberts.

"Both Steven Dow and Anne Roberts are dedicated public servants who have poured countless hours into their roles at the Department of Human Services," Fallin said. "Their work on the Pinnacle Plan, for

Gov. Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Severe Storms

05/30/2012 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 35 Oklahoma counties due to straight line winds, hail, flooding and tornadoes that began Tuesday.

The counties included in the declaration are: Alfalfa, Blaine, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Cotton, Creek, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Garvin, Grady, Grant, Harper, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Latimer, Lincoln, Logan, Love,

Major, McClain, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Stephens, Tillman, Tulsa, Washita, Woods, and Woodward.

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

The severe storms that came through the state last night and into this morning have resulted in damage to homes, businesses and vehicles as well as numerous power outages. Damage assessments in these counties are ongoing and additional severe weather is expected for later today.

Under the Executive Order,

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Pet Breeder Oversight Bill

05/29/2012 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a measure that alters the oversight of commercial pet breeders in the state of Oklahoma. House Bill 2921 abolishes the Commercial Pet Breeders Board and transfers the board’s responsibilities to the state Department of Agriculture. The legislation would apply to breeders who have 11 or more female cats or dogs capable of reproducing.

“By transferring oversight responsibilities to the state Department of Agriculture, this legislation will ensure the humane treatment of animals while also providing fair treatment and regulation of commercial pet breeders in Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “It also allows us to continue to reduce the size of our state government without reducing the quality of services or oversight we are providing. My thanks go out to the Legislature for sending this bill to my desk.”

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Phil Richardson

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Changes to Tribal Liaison Qualifications

05/29/2012 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law House Bill 2563, a measure that modifies the qualifications for the position of the newly created Native American liaison.

In the 2011 legislative session, the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission was eliminated and the executive branch position of Native American liaison was created. The governor’s office agreed with the intent of that legislation, but after it was signed into law raised legal and policy questions.

House Bill 2563, sponsored by Rep. Paul Wesselhoft and Sen. Josh Brecheen, modifies the qualifications of the position of Native American liaison to address concerns raised by the governor’s office.

The bill removes language requiring the liaison be an American Indian of at least one-fourth blood and instead calls for the liaison to be a member or citizen, with

valid proof of membership or citizenship, of a federally recognized American Indian tribe or

Gov. Fallin Praises Efforts at State Capitol to Support Veterans, Military Personnel

05/25/2012 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – As Oklahomans remember the men and women who served and are serving the nation’s Armed Forces this Memorial Day weekend, Governor Fallin praised efforts at the state Capitol this year to support veterans, military personnel and their families.

“This Memorial Day weekend, I encourage all Oklahomans to take time to remember and honor the sacrifices of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. Their service keeps our nation free and protects the freedoms we enjoy every day,” Fallin said. “Oklahomans have a deep and profound respect for the men and women of our military – and their families. We can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them, but we can continue to pursue policies that recognize and honor their service.”

Today, Governor Fallin today signed into two measures aimed at assisting military veterans, personnel and their families.

House Bill 2689, by Rep.

Gov. Fallin Marks the End of the 2012 Legislative Session

05/25/2012 05:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Today marks the last day of the 2012 legislative session in Oklahoma. Governor Mary Fallin worked with the Legislature this year to deliver a fiscally conservative, balanced budget that includes targeted increases for core services. Additionally, she worked with lawmakers to pass and sign into law key reforms in the areas of government efficiency, energy production, health and human services, transportation, child welfare, gun rights, education and more.

“My priority continues to be the creation of more and better jobs in Oklahoma, as well as the delivery of a more cost-efficient and effective state government,” Fallin said. “The many reforms passed and signed into law this year will continue to build our state’s forward momentum. Whether it’s improving public safety, fixing our roads and bridges, boosting education or raising our health outcomes and indicators, the successes of this session will help to make

Gov. Fallin Says Oklahoma Lakes Make Great Stop for Memorial Day

05/24/2012 02:00 PM CDT

Signs Legislation Creating State Policy to Respond to Blue-Green Algae Outbreaks

OKLAHOMA CITY – As Oklahomans gear up for Memorial Day, Governor Mary Fallin says the state’s lakes are great places to enjoy the holiday weekend. Like

thousands of other Oklahomans, Governor Fallin and her family plan to enjoy time at the lake this weekend.

“Going to the lake for the Memorial Day holiday is a tradition for many Oklahomans. Picnics, watermelon, homemade ice cream and fun in the sun all mark the beginning of summer,” Fallin said. “I want to encourage Oklahomans to have fun and enjoy themselves at state parks and lakes but remember to be safe and observe the proper rules and guidelines for boating and lake safety.”

Last year, Oklahoma’s summer season at the lakes was marred by outbreaks of toxic blue-green algae. In response, the governor signed into law today (Thursday, May 24)

Gov. Fallin: Oklahoma Needs a Tax Cut to Compete with Kansas and Stay at the Head of the Pack

05/22/2012 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today urged state legislators to quickly approve an income tax cut, citing the need to remain competitive with Kansas, the state’s neighbor to the north. Earlier today Kansas Governor Sam Brownback signed into law a tax cut bill to reduce Kansas’ top income tax bracket to 4.9 percent.

Oklahoma’s top income tax bracket remains at 5.25 percent, although Governor Fallin and [state legislative leaders have agreed to a tax cut deal](#) to lower the top income bracket. Under the new plan, Oklahoma would experience an income tax reduction in two-stages, eventually seeing its top bracket reduced to 4.5 percent. The plan would first lower the rate to 4.8 percent in Fiscal Year 2013 before lowering that rate further to 4.5 percent in 2015, provided the state’s tax revenues grow by 5

Gov. Fallin Signs Water Conservation Plan into Law

05/22/2012 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin on Monday signed into law the Water for 2060 Act, the most comprehensive, ambitious statewide water conservation measure in the United States. The bill, House Bill 3055, establishes a statewide goal of consuming no more fresh water in 2060 than is consumed currently in the state. The bill also creates an advisory council that will develop a strategy for achieving the statewide goal, as well as recommendations on more efficient use of existing water supplies, identification of new water supplies and more efficient infrastructure.

According to the 2012 update to the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, localized shortages and groundwater depletions could become more prevalent in the next 50 years in more than half of the state’s watersheds.

HB 3055, authored by Speaker Kris Steele, places the focus on preserving fresh water through conservation while also looking toward expanding the use of alternative

Budget Deal Reached: Fallin & Legislative Leaders Announce Fiscally Conservative Budget

05/21/2012 06:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and leaders in the Oklahoma House and Senate today came to a budget agreement that includes targeted funding increases for core services. Fallin and other state leaders said the proposed \$6.8 billion budget was a fiscally conservative roadmap for the state that controls spending while allowing for improvements to be made in health and human services, public safety, transportation, education and other important areas of government.

“This budget deal is a responsible, fiscally conservative agreement that appropriately funds core government services,” Fallin said. “The targeted increases we are pursuing will help to improve child welfare services, repair structurally deficient bridges, increase access to health care in rural areas, and boost resources for public safety. Additionally, this budget agreement will also ensure the state supports common education and keeps its promise to teachers by funding

Gov. Fallin Announces Nominees to the War Veterans Commission

05/18/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the nomination of nine appointees who will make up the new War Veterans Commission if confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate. The governor nominated Wes Bengé, Robert Keister, Don Wadley, Dr. Curtis Bohlman, Tommy Howell, Darrell McGee, Rich Putnam, Jerry G. Riley and Tommy Sellers to the War Veterans Commission.

The War Veterans Commission is the controlling board of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA). It administers veterans programs in Oklahoma through a director appointed by and responsible to the commission. It is composed of nine members appointed by the governor from lists of names submitted by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans. Four members are selected from a list provided by the American Legion, three from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and two from the Disabled American Veterans. Additionally, three members of

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma lawmakers reach deal on personal income tax cuts

05/18/2012 09:30 AM CDT

By Michael McNutt, Oklahoman

An agreement to cut the state's top personal income tax rate of 5.25 percent down to 4.8 percent next year was announced Thursday evening by GOP legislative leaders and Gov. Mary Fallin.

The plan, reached after two weeks of intense negotiations, also includes a one-time additional tax cut tied to a revenue growth trigger in the 2015 fiscal year.

If state revenue grows by at least 5 percent in that year, the income tax rate would be reduced further to 4.5 percent effective Jan. 1, 2015, but if revenue doesn't grow by that amount, the tax rate would not change. The 5 percent trigger is based on the growth of personal income, sales, use, motor vehicle and corporate tax collections.

The deal was announced after a day of meetings, including the governor talking to the GOP House caucus. Senate Republicans at first didn't embrace the plan, but about noon asked to resume talks. The talks continued until

KOCO-TV: Lawmakers, Fallin reach income tax deal

05/18/2012 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahomans will soon be saving more money in their paychecks.

The details of a last-minute deal between Gov. Mary Fallin and top lawmakers to slash income taxes were released Thursday evening.

All taxpayers will get a break. Right now, the top tax rate is 5.25 percent. Next year, that will drop to 4.8 percent. Fallin says cutting taxes will help Oklahoma families recover from the recession and attract more business.

"It's also about Oklahomans' long term economic growth. We can make Oklahoma be more competitive as a state," said Fallin.

Legislatures now have to work quickly to pass the deal. The last day of the legislative session is next Friday.

Gov. Fallin, House and Senate Leaders, Unveil Plans for Tax Cuts and Tax Simplification

05/17/2012 07:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin and leaders in both the House and Senate today introduced a joint plan for income tax cuts and tax code simplification. The proposal lowers the top income tax rate from 5.25 percent to 4.8 percent in Fiscal Year 2013 and includes a one-time additional tax cut tied to a revenue growth trigger in FY 2015. If state revenue grows by at least 5 percent in that year, the income tax rate would be reduced further to 4.5 percent.

The joint proposal represents a tax cut of over \$218 million to Oklahomans when fully implemented in FY 2014, and would cut taxes by an additional \$121.4 million in FY 2015 should the growth trigger be reached. Lost revenue is partially offset by tax reforms totaling \$117 million when fully implemented in FY 2014. These reforms include the elimination of 33 tax credits, the elimination of certain deductions and the elimination of the personal exemption for single filers making over \$35,000 and joint filers making

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Drug-Screening Bill

05/16/2012 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 2388, requiring the state Department of Human Services to screen adults for drug-use who apply to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

If the applicant refuses a drug test or is found to be using drugs, they would be denied benefits.

Applicants who test positive for illegal drug use and undergo substance abuse treatment can reapply for benefits six months after the date of their denial. Child-only cases and underage parents would be exempt from drug screenings. The bill also allows for an alternative payee to be named when a parent has been denied benefits.

“House Bill 2388 will help ensure welfare checks are not being used to pay for drugs,” Fallin said. “Hard working taxpayers shouldn’t be asked to subsidize drug abuse, and this bill will help to ensure they are not.”

“Additionally, HB 2388

Governor Fallin Signs ‘Open Carry’ Legislation into Law

05/15/2012 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1733, a measure that allows Oklahoma citizens to openly carry firearms. The bill permits those who are licensed, or already have been licensed, to carry a firearm under the Oklahoma Self Defense Act to openly carry a weapon or conceal it. It also allows property owners to openly carry a firearm on their property without a concealed carry permit for the purpose of self defense.

To receive a license under the Oklahoma Self Defense Act, applicants must take a firearms safety and training course and submit to a background check by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. Those convicted of felonies and certain misdemeanors may not receive a handgun license.

With Governor Fallin’s signature on SB 1733, Oklahoma becomes the 25th state with either “permissive open carry” laws (no permit required) or “licensed open carry” (permit

Gov. Fallin Signs Statewide Public Safety Plan into Law

05/10/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The statewide public safety plan developed through Oklahoma’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative has been signed into law by Gov. Mary Fallin.

“Increasing public safety is a top priority of my administration and a primary function of state government. The reforms in HB 3052 will help to reduce crime and ensure our streets are safer for Oklahoma families,” Fallin said. “In addition to lowering crime rates, reducing the incarceration rate and giving law

enforcement more resources to fight crime, this bill will help us to save taxpayer dollars by helping our corrections system operate in a more efficient and effective way.”

Criminal justice stakeholders from across the state stood in support Thursday as Fallin ceremoniously signed House Bill 3052. The bill, authored by House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman, was formally signed Wednesday.

“Today

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma law directs state agencies, colleges to save energy

05/09/2012 09:30 AM CDT

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

A bill signed into law Tuesday kicks off an energy conservation program for state agencies and educational institutions estimated to save the state as much as \$500 million over the next 10 years.

Senate Bill 1096, called the Oklahoma State Facilities Energy Conservation Program, directs all state agencies and higher education institutions to achieve an energy efficiency and conservation improvement target of at least 20 percent by the year 2020. The measure takes effect in late August.

Fallin said the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, a nonprofit group interested in advancing energy policies, has ranked Oklahoma as the fourth-worst state in the nation as it relates to energy conservation and energy efficiencies.

“That's not acceptable,” Fallin said. “We can do better ... and today marks that new day that we are going to do better.

“Not only have we

Governor Fallin Signs into Law Educational Accountability Measure

05/08/2012 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1797, a measure that consolidates existing teacher accountability and preparation entities into a single Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) in order to save taxpayer money while streamlining existing education accountability initiatives. The initiative was among Governor Fallin’s 2012 legislative agenda items.

Under SB 1797, the existing Office of Accountability, now under the direction of the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education, will be combined with the Teacher Preparation Commission to form the EQA office. Functions of the Teacher Preparation Commission will be managed by the EQA office. The measure also restructures the Education Oversight Board and renames it the Commission for

Education, Instruction Quality and Accountability. The secretary of education will serve as chair of the commission and oversee the EQA office.

Gov. Fallin Signs into Law Energy Efficiency Measure

05/08/2012 04:00 PM CDT

Goal for Agencies, Higher Education is 20 Percent Improvement by 2020

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1096, a bill that directs all state agencies and higher education institutions to achieve at least 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency and conservation by the year 2020. The governor first outlined the initiative in her Oklahoma First Energy Plan and asked the Legislature this year in her State of the State address to write the plan into law.

“Senate Bill 1096 outlines several common sense energy conservation policies for state agencies and higher education institutions that will save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars,” Fallin said. “My goal has always been to deliver a government that is smaller, smarter and more cost efficient. By pursuing these energy conservation reforms, we will be able to do just that.”

Gov. Fallin Signs Bill to Help Veterans Translate Military Experience into Academic Credits

05/08/2012 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law SB 1863, a bill that will help veterans translate their military experience and skills into academic credits and credit for workforce training.

“We owe our gratitude to the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces for their service and sacrifice. The men and women in our military, as well as all of our veterans, possess some of the most unique skill sets in the world,” Fallin said. “The Post-Military Service Occupation, Education and Credentialing Act will give veterans credit for the experience they gained in service of the country and provide them the help they deserve to find jobs and re-enter the workforce once their service is complete.”

SB 1863 would allow Oklahoma colleges, university and technology centers to provide academic credit to a military veteran, who was honorably discharged in the previous three years, for any applicable education, training

Oklahoma Now: More Good Economic News for Oklahoma

05/07/2012 04:00 PM CDT

By Gov. Mary Fallin

As many other states struggle to recover from the current recession, Oklahoma continues to build on its forward momentum. The latest evidence of the positive

trend in Oklahoma's economy comes in the form of a [national survey of small business owners](#) by the Kauffman Foundation, an organization that promotes entrepreneurship, and Thumbtack.com, a national network of small business owners.

In the survey of more than 275,000 small business owners, Oklahoma ranked as the third-best state in the nation for small business creation, receiving an A or A+ for things like ease of starting a small business, cost of hiring a new employee, friendliness of regulations and tax code. In fact, Oklahoma City was the number one city for overall small business friendliness in the country and Oklahoma was in the top 10 for nearly every category and the top 20 for every positive

Governor Fallin Lauds Legislature for Passage of Energy Efficiency Bill

05/02/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY— Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on Senate Bill 1096, directing all state agencies and higher education institutions to achieve an energy efficiency and conservation improvement target of at least 20 percent by the year 2020. The governor outlined a proposal for such an initiative in her [Oklahoma First Energy Plan](#) and asked the Legislature to write the plan into law in her State of the State address earlier this year. Estimates indicate that savings to the state could range from \$300 to \$500 million over 10 years.

“This energy efficiency bill is a central component of our agenda to make Oklahoma's state government smaller, smarter and more cost efficient, and I applaud the Legislature for sending it to my desk.

“Senate Bill 1096 has the potential to save hundreds

Governor Fallin Approves of A-F School Reform Rules Submitted by State Board of Education

05/02/2012 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today approved rules submitted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) establishing an A-F report card system to grade school performance. The rules were adopted by the State Board of Education in March, based on a law (HB 1456) enacted by the Legislature and signed by Governor Fallin in 2011.

Fallin said the law, as well as the rules submitted by the SDE, are part of a comprehensive effort to improve performance and accountability measures at public schools.

“Nothing is more important to the future of this state than improving our schools,” Fallin said. “Job growth and prosperity are directly linked to workforce quality and educational achievement. All of those things require high-quality educational institutions at every level.”

“To ensure that we are providing quality schools that are serving our children well and to identify those instances where we are not,

Governor Fallin is spokesperson for OKDHS public service announcement

05/01/2012 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin has partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) to encourage more Oklahomans to become foster and adoptive parents.

Fallin issued a proclamation recognizing May as Foster Care Awareness Month in Oklahoma and she is serving as spokesperson for the statewide OKDHS public service announcement (PSA) campaign. Fallin appears in a PSA urging Oklahomans to get involved and "change a child's lifetime."

More than 8,000 children and youth are currently in foster care and there is an urgent need for foster and adoptive families, especially for teenagers, sibling groups and children who have special medical or physical needs. For those who may not be able to foster children, there are other ways to get involved such as volunteering at a local children's shelter, hosting a toy drive, or becoming a trained volunteer to assist with home studies.

The PSA will be broadcast on commercial

Oklahoman: Oklahoma's Gov. Fallin leads effort to seek affordable CNG vehicles

05/01/2012 08:45 AM CDT

Oklahoma's governor and 12 other governors write to nearly 20 auto manufacturers asking them to produce more affordable compressed natural gas vehicles.

By Michael McNutt, Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin, joined by 12 other governors, asked nearly 20 auto manufacturers Monday to produce more affordable compressed natural gas vehicles for state fleets that would be available for the average car buyer, too.

The nonpartisan effort, first announced last fall by Fallin and Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, also would increase the demand for natural gas and likely reverse plummeting natural gas prices, which would aid energy-rich states such as Oklahoma.

Natural gas producers pay a state tax on their production so new markets should help the state's coffers and make it more of a reliable revenue stream.

"Despite their potential as a much more affordable form of transportation, CNG vehicles continue to be held back

Governor Fallin: Oklahomans Need a Significant Income Tax Cut Signed into Law This Year

04/30/2012 05:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the urgent need for Oklahoma lawmakers to pass and sign into law a significant reduction in the state income tax:

“Oklahoma families need and deserve a significant income tax reduction. Cutting taxes will not only allow our citizens to keep more of their hard earned money, it will also make Oklahoma a more competitive state to do business in and will help to create more and better jobs. Pursuing income tax cuts and tax simplification continue to be a priority of mine as I work with lawmakers to enact policies that will help to grow Oklahoma’s economy.

“Earlier this year, I proposed the ‘Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act,’ a bold plan to dramatically cut taxes, reduce the total number of tax brackets from seven to three, and set the stage for the gradual elimination of the income tax. That plan is one of several tax-cut plans

Governor Fallin Leads 13 States to Partner with Auto Manufacturers to Develop Affordable CNG Vehicles

04/30/2012 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined governors from 13 states in inviting auto manufacturers in the United States to partner in making more affordable Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles available to both state automobile fleets and private sector consumers.

In a letter to auto manufacturers delivered today (see attachment), the 13 governors reinforced their commitment to purchasing CNG vehicles for their state fleets, both as a cost-saving measure and as a means to incentivizing the manufacture of affordable and functional CNG automobiles. The letter refers to a multi-state Request for Information (RFI), asking manufacturers to provide background and information in anticipation of a multi-state solicitation later this year. Participating states include: Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, Utah, Maine, New Mexico, West Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Ohio, Mississippi and Louisiana.

KJRH Channel 2: Governor signs bill lowering turnpike penalties

04/26/2012 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - The penalty for running an Oklahoma turnpike toll without the correct change is changing.

Tuesday, Governor Mary Fallin signed a new bill, changing the penalty to one flat fee.

Soon, tickets will always cost \$25.00, instead of increasing each time, to \$50.00 and up to \$75.00.

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority asked the legislature to make the change.

"We wanted to create more of customer interaction that would hopefully entice them to become a Pikepass customer," said Jack Damrill, a spokesperson for the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.

Damrill said the reduced fines are a gesture of goodwill towards drivers.

"We felt like our current structure, 25-50-75 was too punitive," said Damrill.

The Turnpike Authority hopes when customers call to deal with tickets they will be interested in getting a Pikepass.

"We can talk to them about becoming a customer and the

Tulsa World: Business survey bodes well for Tulsa

04/26/2012 11:30 AM CDT

BY BETTY BAILEY, Business Viewspoint

Findings from a recently released statewide survey conducted by Gov. Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce reveal some very positive trends for Oklahoma and the Tulsa area.

A closer look at Tulsa County's results suggests that businesses in our area, like those across the entire state, are optimistic and are hiring, which is a good sign that we are recovering from what has been a tough few years.

More than 5,300 companies participated in the FallinforBusiness.com online questionnaire, the largest statewide survey of businesses ever conducted in Oklahoma.

The responding companies represented more than 250,000 jobs, or 20 percent of Oklahoma's workforce. Of the companies that responded to the survey, 451 are located in Tulsa County.

A leading economic indicator is job creation and the extent to which Tulsa-area business are hiring. Statewide, 37 percent

Tulsa World: Oklahoma Gov. Fallin's tax-cut proposal passed by Senate

04/26/2012 11:30 AM CDT

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK, World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - The Oklahoma Senate on Wednesday passed Gov. Mary Fallin's tax-cut proposal.

The measure is expected to wind up in a conference committee with several other tax-cut proposals.

House Bill 3061 would reduce Oklahoma's current tax structure to three brackets from seven.

Under the measure, individuals earning less than \$15,000 a year and couples earning \$30,000 or less would pay no state income tax.

Individuals earning at least \$15,000 but less than \$35,000 and couples earning at least \$30,000 but less than \$70,000 would pay 2.25 percent on all income.

Individuals earning more than \$35,000 and couples earning more than \$70,000 would pay 3.5 percent on all income.

Oklahoma's current top income tax rate is 5.25 percent.

The measure would eliminate many tax credits and exemptions, according to Fallin's

SBA Disaster Assistance Granted for Woodward County

04/26/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Woodward County has been granted disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for the deadly tornado outbreak that occurred earlier this month.

The designation provides SBA low interest disaster loans for renters, homeowners, business owners and private, non-profits to repair or replace any property damaged by the storm which was not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. The loan program is also available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the storm. Under SBA rules, the assistance is also available for in the contiguous counties of Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, and Woods.

“When I went to Woodward immediately after the tornado struck, I spoke with families who lost everything and saw businesses that were completely destroyed,” Fallin said. “I also saw a community that was determined to get back on its feet quickly.

Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act Advances in Oklahoma Senate

04/25/2012 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma State Senate today passed the “Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act,” a tax measure first proposed by Governor Mary Fallin in her February State of the State address. Fallin’s plan reduces the top income tax rate from 5.25% to 3.5%, simplifies the tax code by reducing the total number of tax brackets from seven to three, and eliminates many tax credits and tax exemptions. The plan also provides for the eventual elimination of the state income tax, with

additional yearly reductions of .25% to the tax rate linked to a 5% rate of growth in state tax revenue collections.

“I am grateful to the Senate for passing the ‘Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act,’ as well as their continued focus on tax relief and reform,” Fallin said. “This is one of several tax cut bills that has now passed in both the House and Senate, and it is clear that a majority of our

Governor Fallin Praises Legislature, Signs Cabinet Flexibility Bill into Law

04/24/2012 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law HB 2834, which gives the governor flexibility to alter her cabinet at any time during her term of office. Currently, each cabinet member is locked into four year terms as required by Oklahoma statute. The bill was considered at the request of Governor Fallin, and authored by Representative Scott Martin and Senator Rick Brinkley.

“To lead effectively, an executive needs the ability to choose his or her advisors,” Fallin said. “This bill will help me as well as future governors to call on individuals with appropriate expertise to serve over the course of multiple-year terms. I am thankful to the Legislature for sending it to my desk, and happy to sign it into law.”

Cabinet members will still require Senate confirmation under the new law, which goes into effect on November 1, 2012.

Oklahoma, EPA, and PSO Reach Agreement on Air Quality Rules

04/24/2012 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Today Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin announced that the State of Oklahoma has reached an agreement with Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) and the Environmental Protection Agency that settles compliance challenges with federal air quality rules relating to PSO's two coal-fired power plants at its Northeastern Station in Oologah, OK.

In May, the Attorney General's Office filed a lawsuit against the EPA to allow more time for Oklahoma stakeholders to craft a state solution.

The Oklahoma-based agreement, which has now been reached, permits PSO to comply with EPA rules, including the Regional Haze Rule and the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule, while simultaneously protecting Oklahoma consumers and ratepayers. Under the settlement agreement, PSO agrees to meet specified emission rates at both Northeastern coal units, retire one unit in 2017, install certain emissions control equipment on one Northeastern

KWTV News 9: Governor Requests Federal Disaster Assistance For Woodward

04/19/2012 10:45 AM CDT

By LaShauna Sewell, News9.com

A tornado killed six people in Woodward and destroyed or damaged more than 200 homes and businesses. OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin requested Wednesday a federal disaster declaration for Woodward County following Sunday morning's deadly tornado. The twister swept through Woodward just after midnight, killing six people, destroying nearly 100 homes and businesses and leaving a long trail of destruction.

A federal disaster declaration would provide assistance to people and businesses in the devastated area. Gov. Fallin said it would be an important first step to helping residents get back on their feet.

"Last weekend's deadly tornadoes led to the tragic loss of six lives and destroyed or severely damaged many homes and businesses," Fallin said. "Having spoken with many of the residents in Woodward who lost everything, I know how important it is to do everything in our power to

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma women get new start in recovery program

04/19/2012 10:15 AM CDT

The Women in Recovery program graduated its largest class — 18 — during a ceremony Wednesday at the Oklahoma state Capitol.

By Michael McNutt, The Oklahoman

An honors high school graduate, Brooke Larson never thought that within a decade she would be a drug addict facing a 10-year prison sentence. An addict in prison, Larson never expected she would someday be sitting next to Oklahoma's governor and shaking her hand at the state Capitol.

Larson, 32, was among 18 women who recently completed the Women in Recovery program, an alternative to incarceration for nonviolent women in Tulsa County who have alcohol and drug addictions. It is the program's sixth graduating class.

Fallin told the graduates and more than 100 attending Wednesday's ceremony that Oklahoma ranks first in the nation with the rate of incarcerated nonviolent female offenders.

"With programs like Women in Recovery, we are

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Anniversary of the Murrah Building Bombing

04/19/2012 07:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the 17th anniversary of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing:

“Seventeen years ago today, an unimaginable and shocking act of terrorism was perpetrated on Oklahoma City and on our nation. One-hundred and sixty eight lives were lost in that terrible attack, including 19 small children. The horror, the brutality and the evil of the Murrah bombing can never be overstated.

“It was an attack that could have easily crippled our city, and left our people hopeless. It did not. Instead, the people of Oklahoma banded together – with the help of volunteers and well-wishers from across the nation and even the world – to overcome. We worked together; we comforted one another; and we rebuilt. Today we are a more prosperous city and a stronger people.

“On this anniversary, I would ask that all Oklahomans as well as all Americans remember

Governor Mary Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Woodward County After Tornado

04/18/2012 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration for Woodward County in the wake of the deadly tornado that swept through the town of Woodward early Sunday morning. The designation would provide federal assistance to individuals and businesses in the tornado-ravaged area.

Six confirmed deaths including three children and 36 injuries are attributed to the Woodward tornado. According to preliminary damage assessments conducted this weekend, the storm impacted 224 homes and businesses in Woodward County. Of those, 73 were destroyed, 22 sustained major damage and 21 had minor damage.

“Last weekend’s deadly tornadoes led to the tragic loss of six lives and destroyed or severely damaged many homes and businesses,” Fallin said. “Having spoken with many of the residents in Woodward who lost everything, I know how important it is to do everything in our power to quickly rebuild this community. This

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Tornadoes

04/15/2012 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 12 Oklahoma counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight line winds and flooding that began Friday.

The counties included in the declaration are: Alfalfa, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Ellis, Harper, Jackson, Kiowa, Logan, Oklahoma, Woods and Woodward.

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

Since Friday, these Oklahoma counties have experienced tornadoes, straight line winds, damaging hail and flooding. Damage assessments continue in the hardest hit areas, including the city of Woodward where a large tornado has resulted in extensive damage to homes and businesses as well as numerous fatalities.

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions. The declaration also marks a first step toward seeking

Governor Fallin Submits Workers' Compensation Court Nominees

04/13/2012 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today submitted four nominees for the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court: Margaret Bomhoff, Michael McGivern, Brad Taylor, and Carla Snipes. These are the first nominees submitted by Fallin for the Workers' Compensation Court.

“These men and women have over 80 years of combined experience serving in law and, specifically, the field of workers' compensation law,” Fallin said. “As a group, they have worked on the behalf of both employers and employees, and are committed to being a part of a process that is fair, efficient and just. I am confident that each one will dedicate themselves to a strict reading of the letter of the law, and will interpret – not legislate – from the bench. I'm proud of these nominees and I encourage the Senate to quickly confirm them.”

Margaret Anne Bomhoff of Edmond currently works for the Fellers, Snider, Blankenship, Bailey and

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on American Airlines Restructuring

04/13/2012 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding American Airlines' restructuring process:

“As Governor, my priority has always been to retain and create as many good jobs as possible for working Oklahomans and their families. In that light, the Department of Commerce and my office, like many others in Oklahoma, have been monitoring the progress of American Airline's restructuring under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code. While this process is difficult and painful, it is also necessary if American is to emerge a viable company and a strong competitor.

“Questions have risen recently about what the best outcome of the bankruptcy process may be for Oklahoma, including the possibility of a hostile takeover of the company. I want to make this clear: for Oklahoma's sake, there is no question that the best outcome for our state and its workforce is for American to

Governor Fallin Announces Judicial Appointments

04/09/2012 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced two judicial appointments. Thomas E. Prince has been appointed to the position of District Judge of the 7th Judicial District (Oklahoma County), while A. Clark Jett has been

appointed to the position of Associate District Judge in Texas County. Neither appointment requires Senate confirmation.

“Each of these men has a distinguished legal career and a proven dedication to the law,” said Fallin. “I am confident they will serve our state well in the judiciary.”

Prince is replacing Judge Twyla Gray, who is deceased. Prince has been practicing law in Oklahoma since 1982, when he graduated from the Oklahoma City University School of Law. He is currently self-employed, practicing business and corporate law, employment law, health law and a variety of other fields as the sole practitioner at the Prince Law Office in Edmond. Prior to that, Prince was a partner

Fallin Signs Legislation Giving Schools Option to Open Facilities to the Public

04/05/2012 05:00 PM CDT

SB 1882 Limits Liability of Districts that Allow Groups to Use Facilities for Physical Fitness

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1882. The legislation limits the legal liability of school districts that open indoor or outdoor facilities on a voluntary basis to community groups or individuals for physical activity.

Fallin asked the legislation to be passed in her State of the State Address as part of her agenda to encourage physical fitness and increase health indicators across the state of Oklahoma.

“Becoming a healthier state will not only save lives, it will save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and improve our economy,” Fallin said. “That’s why we’re doing everything we can to help encourage our citizens to exercise and stay fit.”

“Unfortunately, many districts have been reluctant to open up school property to their local

Google Announces Additional Investment in Oklahoma

04/04/2012 02:30 PM CDT

Construction to Begin on New Facility in Mayes County Google to Double Capacity in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Commerce Dave Lopez joined Google officials today at a news conference at the Oklahoma State Capitol to unveil Google’s plan to expand its data center operation at the MidAmerica Industrial Park near Pryor in Mayes County. The new facility will be constructed next to the original data center which was dedicated in September 2011 and will double production capacity and add several employee amenities.

“We welcome the news today of Google’s plans to continue investing in Oklahoma,” commented Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin. “Google’s decision to increase the

size of their data center in Mayes County highlights the attractiveness of our state as a place to invest and do business. As a global company recognized for creating

Report Shows Business Leaders Express Confidence in Oklahoma's Business Climate

04/04/2012 11:00 AM CDT

FallinForBusiness.com survey results announced

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce today announced findings from the FallinForBusiness.com business climate survey.

During December and January, nearly 5,400 business leaders from all 77 counties responded to the governor's request for input. Their companies represent more than 250,000 jobs and more than 20 percent of Oklahoma's total workforce.

The large number of survey responses brings a high degree of confidence in the survey results. The margin of error for questions in the report ranges from 0.9 percent to 1.6 percent, which is a 95 percent confidence interval. Percentages of respondents are similar to state breakdowns for industry, number of employees and geographic dispersion.

"I want to thank all of the business owners and executives who took the time to respond to

Gov Fallin, AT&T Promote 'Socially Innovative' Approach to Increase High School Graduates

03/29/2012 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — As access to skilled workers becomes increasingly vital to the U.S. economy, AT&T is launching a quarter-billion-dollar campaign to help more students graduate from high school ready for careers and college, and to ensure the country is better prepared to meet global competition, Governor Mary Fallin and AT&T Oklahoma State President Bryan Gonterman announced today.

AT&T Aspire, already among the most significant U.S. corporate educational initiatives with more than \$100 million invested since 2008, will tackle high school success and college/career readiness for students at-risk of dropping out of high school through a much larger, "socially innovative" approach. Social innovation goes beyond traditional philanthropy – which typically involves only charitable giving – to also engage people and technology to bring different approaches, new solutions and added resources to challenging social problems. The

Governor Fallin Offers Support for Federal Balanced Budget Resolution

03/27/2012 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded Senator Dan Newberry and Representative Glen Mulready for introducing Senate Concurrent Resolution 33, calling for a federal balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The resolution notes that “an irresponsible pattern of spending and borrowing has resulted in a total outstanding national debt of more than \$15 trillion,” and calls upon the president and Congress to balance the budget and to “reduce both spending levels and the annual debt.”

Fallin asked the legislature in her State of the State address earlier this year to pass such a resolution, saying the state of Oklahoma needs to send a message to Washington that out-of-control spending was hurting the economy and threatening the nation’s future.

“Washington’s reckless spending habits are leading this country off a fiscal cliff,” said Fallin. “It is wrong; it is irresponsible

Governor Fallin Statement Regarding President Obama’s Remarks in Cushing

03/22/2012 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding President Obama’s remarks on energy policy during a visit to Cushing, Okla.:

“I am happy that President Obama took the time to visit Oklahoma today, and I welcome him to our great state. Oklahoma offers a fine example of how a thriving energy industry coupled with pro-growth policies can lead to low unemployment and a strong economy. Energy exploration and production is an important part of our history and our current success, and it is my hope the president was able to learn something from our many industry experts during his time here.

“In his remarks today, President Obama said he supports an ‘all of the above’ energy strategy. As evidence of that support, he cites the Cushing pipeline, an important project being developed and paid for by TransCanada, a private sector corporation. In this case the

Governor Fallin Statement on Preston Doerflinger Being Named Interim DHS Director

03/21/2012 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement regarding the temporary appointment of Secretary of Finance Preston Doerflinger to the position of interim director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS):

“Secretary Doerflinger is a problem-solver with a proven track record of getting results. As the director of the Office of State Finance, he has been instrumental in reforming and consolidating state agencies in a manner that will save millions of taxpayer dollars while improving state services. His leadership and good judgment have helped my administration to deliver on the promise of more efficient and

effective state government. I am confident that his appointment as interim director of DHS will serve that agency well as it pursues reforms and continued improvements. I applaud our DHS commissioners for making an excellent choice in Preston.

“My thanks go out as well to Terri White, whose service to both

Governor Fallin Statement on President Obama's Visit to Cushing

03/21/2012 11:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement today regarding President Barack Obama's visit to Cushing, Oklahoma, where he is scheduled to discuss energy policy:

“I am pleased that President Obama is able to make his first visit to the great state of Oklahoma this week and to personally see the good work going on in Cushing. The TransCanada pipeline to be built there will connect Oklahoma to oil markets on the Gulf Coast, resulting in the creation of more than 1,000 Oklahoma jobs. This project will help to bolster our energy industry and security for years to come.

“I am glad the president supports the construction of the pipeline connecting Cushing to the Gulf. Impeding the progress of something which is so obviously beneficial to both the economy and the energy security of the United States would have been nothing short of irresponsible.

“Unfortunately, President Obama and his

The Oklahoman: Encouraging, lauding steps to reduce cancer risks

03/18/2012 09:00 AM CDT

Published: March 18, 2012

Public officials find it difficult to lead when personal lifestyle is involved, including choices about smoking, exercise and diet. Yet such prevention initiatives remain important levers for reducing disease. That's why we should be especially proud of Oklahoma's “CEO,” Gov. Mary Fallin, and her decision to prohibit tobacco use on state property. The CEO Roundtable on Cancer stands behind Fallin. Her action is an important step for improved health and a call for leadership nationwide to lower cancer rates.

How important? Government data on lung cancer place Oklahoma eighth nationwide in that form of cancer for men and fifth for women. This form of cancer is the highest cause of cancer-related death in Oklahoma. Fallin's action could also help Oklahoma understand that improved health comes from choices that stave off illness in the first place, whether that illness is cancer, obesity or

Governor Fallin Announces Appointment to Board of Regents of Western Oklahoma State College

03/16/2012 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Altus resident Randy Sheets has been reappointed to the Board of Regents of Western Oklahoma State College. He is being reappointed for a seven year term pending confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

“Randy has done a fantastic job since first being appointed to the board in 1996,” Fallin said. “He has proven his dedication to WOSC and to quality higher education. I know he will continue to do a great job for the school and the community.”

Sheets is a physician at Integris Medical Clinic. He has taught at the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine and the Southwestern Oklahoma Family Practice residency program in Lawton.

He was a finalist for the Aesculapius Teaching Award for teaching medical students in 2010 and awarded the Kenneth L. Evans Excellence in Teaching Award in 2003.

Sheets and his wife Debra have two children and three

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

03/14/2012 10:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to various boards, councils and commissions.

Advisory Council on Workers’ Compensation

Dan Simmons of Oklahoma City is the president of CompChoice, a company that provides managed care services specific to workers’ compensation for employers and employees. He is a board member at the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce. Simmons received a bachelor’s degree from St. Mary’s College in St. Louis, Mo. and a doctorate degree in chiropractic medicine from Logan College of Chiropractic. He is being reappointed to the council and will serve as a representative of a predominant statewide broad-based business organization.

Rochelle Guinn of Norman is the assistant general counsel and senior director of employment and labor at Sonic Corporation. She received a bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma State University and a law

Governor Fallin Signs Supplemental Funding Bill

03/12/2012 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 1959, which provides \$92.5 million in emergency supplemental funding for needs in education, public safety, natural disaster relief, and at the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office. The governor released the following statement:

“Today’s supplemental funding measures will help to ensure the state of Oklahoma is keeping its commitment to our teachers, protecting our citizens by putting more troopers on our state highways, and providing necessary assistance to communities hard-hit by natural disasters. It also provides necessary personnel and equipment

upgrades at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, helping to put that agency back on a path to accreditation.

“All of these funding measures are both urgent and necessary. I applaud the Legislature for sending this supplemental bill to my desk quickly, and I am happy to be able to sign it into

Governor Fallin Comments on Legislature's Decision on SB 1629

03/08/2012 05:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today concerning legislative leaders' decision to hold Senate Bill 1629:

“I accept the Legislature's decision and I remain extremely hopeful that the U.S. Supreme Court will do the right thing and rule the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional,” Fallin said. “In the event that it does not, I still believe that establishing a free market, Oklahoma-based online health insurance marketplace that protects consumer choice is the best defense against a federally run exchange.”

“Ultimately, Oklahoma Republicans all share the same goal: to prevent the unaffordable and unconstitutional federal health care law from being implemented here. We will continue to work together to pursue that common goal and to protect the rights of all Oklahomans.”

Governor Fallin Selects Mark Barcus for Tulsa District Court Vacancy

03/08/2012 08:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the selection of Judge Mark Barcus of Tulsa to fill a district court judge vacancy in the 14th Judicial District in Tulsa.

Barcus currently serves as the vice chief judge of the Domestic Relations Division in Tulsa County District Court. He previously served as a family court referee in Tulsa County District Court.

“Judge Barcus has proven to be a fair and effective judge and a dedicated public servant,” Fallin said. “I know he'll work to defend both the letter and spirit of the law and will do a great job as Tulsa County's new district judge.”

Barcus previously spent several years in private law practice in the Tulsa area. He served on the Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education. Barcus serves on a variety of organizations supporting the arts, including the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Arts Institute.

He served

Fallin: Air Force Cuts Show Misplaced Priorities at the White House

03/06/2012 06:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement in response to the news that the Air Force will eliminate hundreds of military and non-military personnel in Oklahoma, including the 600 men and women of Tinker Air Force Base's 3rd Combat Communications Group, also called the Third Herd:

“The announced cuts to Oklahoma Air Force personnel are both disappointing and alarming. Oklahoma's Air Force bases are not only important parts of their local communities; they play a vital role in our national defense. The decision to eliminate hundreds of military and civilian Air Force personnel will mean Oklahoma will lose jobs and the United States Air Force will be without quality units like the Third Herd.

“It is disturbing that President Obama is so eager to make billions of dollars in funding and personnel cuts to our military even while spending on entitlements and social programs continue to

Governor Fallin's Agenda Moves Forward in Legislative Committees

03/02/2012 01:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked lawmakers for quickly acting on proposals outlined in her State of the State address and in her executive budget, presented at the start of the legislative session. Fallin had outlined proposals to cut the state income tax, modernize state government, increase energy efficiency in government, improve the state's bridges and highways, and provide better access to medical care in rural and underserved areas. She also proposed emergency funding measures in areas that include public safety, education and natural disaster relief. All of these proposals have now been heard and passed out of their respective legislative committees.

“Oklahomans want their elected officials to focus on legislation that will help to create jobs, improve their quality of life and reduce government waste,” Fallin said. “I'm happy to say that's exactly what our lawmakers are

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma governor's income tax reduction plan wins House committee approval

03/01/2012 08:45 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin's personal income tax reduction plan cleared its first legislative hurdle Wednesday when a House committee voted to advance it to the full House for consideration.

But her proposal, which calls for cutting the top personal income tax rate by nearly half, has a tough road ahead as lawmakers struggle to eliminate economic tax credits, some of which are necessary for her plan to succeed.

The House of Representatives Appropriations and Budget Committee voted 9-8 to defeat an amendment by Rep. Don Armes, R-Lawton, to remove a tax credit for the state's wind industry from the measure, House Bill 3061. And the committee later voted not to pass HB 2876, which would have extended or imposed a two-year moratorium on 29 tax credits, which would have saved the state \$29 million in the upcoming fiscal year and \$37.3 million in the 2014 fiscal year.

The author of the measure, Rep. David Dank,

Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act Advances in Committee

03/01/2012 08:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – The “Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act,” the tax cut plan outlined by Governor Mary Fallin in her State of the State address, was heard today in the House Appropriations Committee where it passed by a margin of 11-6. The bill is sponsored by House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman. The bill now heads to the House floor before it can make its way to the Senate.

“The Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act is a game-changer for the state,” Fallin said. “This reform measure will provide immediate tax relief to a large majority of Oklahoma families while delivering a far more attractive tax climate for businesses deciding where to locate. By passing this legislation, we’ll be leaving more money in the pockets of working Oklahomans while helping to attract new and better jobs. This will deliver the boldest, most significant tax reduction in state history, and

Tulsa World: Aviation's roots firmly planted in state

02/29/2012 10:30 AM CST

BY D.R. STEWART, World Staff Writer

Oklahoma's long and colorful aviation history is part of the fabric of the state, and its economic contributions have sustained it through wars and recessions, Gov. Mary Fallin said Tuesday.

Speaking at the 2012 Partnership Conference - sponsored by the Oklahoma Airport Operators Association, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration Southwest Region Airports Division - Fallin said the Oklahoma aviation industry precedes statehood.

The governor spoke before 350 people at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel and Convention Center.

While Oklahoma's oil boom was beginning with the drilling of the Ida E. Glenn No. 1 well 10 miles south of Tulsa in 1905, Clyde Cessna began flying his first airplane, Fallin said.

"Another Oklahoman named Wiley Post discovered the jet stream and twice set records for flying aircraft around the world," she said. "He

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma legislative leaders, governor reach deal on emergency funding

02/28/2012 10:30 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, Capitol Bureau Oklahoman

A deal has been reached to provide \$92.5 million of emergency funding for this fiscal year that, among other things, would pay for \$5,000 National Board Certified teacher bonuses, hold a trooper academy and reimburse local communities and counties for disaster assistance, legislative budget leaders announced Tuesday.

The money comes from increased state revenue collections this fiscal year. Collections are coming in about 10 percent higher than estimates for the 2012 fiscal year, which ends July 1. The money for the supplemental appropriations is from increased collections.

"Thanks to our growing economy, the state now has the money to address obligations we are committed to," said House Appropriations and Budget Committee Chairman Earl Sears, R-Bartlesville.

Senate Bill 1959 was scheduled to be taken up Tuesday by a Senate joint budget committee. A House joint budget committee

Governor Fallin Applauds TransCanada Decision to Begin Construction of Southern Portion of Keystone

02/27/2012 12:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today applauded TransCanada's decision to proceed with the construction of an oil pipeline from Cushing, Oklahoma to the U.S. Gulf Coast. The pipeline represents the southern leg of the Keystone XL Pipeline project that would transport oil from Canada and various U.S. markets to the Gulf Coast.

"Connecting Cushing to oil markets in the Gulf Coast will provide both an immediate economic jolt to the state of Oklahoma as well as a long term boost to our energy sector," Fallin said. "Construction of the pipeline alone will create 1,200 jobs, while increasing access to the important markets along the coast will help energy producers for many years to come. This is an important, positive step forward for Oklahoma, and my thanks go out to TransCanada for its leadership on this issue."

TransCanada also announced today that it plans to file a Presidential Permit application

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on State Revenue Certification

02/21/2012 11:15 AM CST

Governor Says Additional \$47.2 Million Should Go Toward Tax Cuts

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today welcomed the news of an additional expenditure authority of \$47.2 million in state revenue as presented to the Board of Equalization. The latest estimates set total appropriations authority at \$6,579,752,153, which is \$47.2 million more than the previous estimate from December. Additionally, the board announced that, according to the revised estimates for the current fiscal year, \$319 million likely will be deposited into the state's Rainy Day Fund.

"The increase in certified revenue is another positive signal that Oklahoma's economy continues to bounce back. It's also great evidence that our pro-growth, pro-business reforms and fiscally sound policy decisions are paying off," Fallin said.

"The best way to continue our prosperity

Tulsa World: Returning troops get job help through a Guard program

02/20/2012 09:00 AM CST

BY JERRY WOFFORD, World Staff Writer

Service members leaving the military have a new resource in Oklahoma to help them with employment in the civilian world.

The Oklahoma National Guard is developing the Employment Coordination Program, which will connect service members and veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to employment opportunities in the state.

With more than 3,000 members of the Oklahoma National Guard in various stages of demobilization from their deployments to Afghanistan and Kuwait, Guard officials say the program will be important in providing them with stability.

About a third of the soldiers returning will not have jobs when they get back to the state, said Maj. Geoff Legler, spokesman for the Oklahoma National Guard.

Lt. Col. Warren Griffis started as the director of the Employment Coordination Program in January and has since worked to build the program from the ground up, all in preparation for the

Tulsa World: 30 more soldiers from 45th return from Afghanistan

02/18/2012 09:15 AM CST

BY KEVIN CANFIELD, World Staff Writer

NORMAN - About 30 members of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were welcomed home from Afghanistan on Friday by family, friends and the state's top elected official.

"We know your dedication and sacrifice keeps our state and our nation free," said Gov. Mary Fallin. "I want each and every one of you to know that the entire state of Oklahoma holds a profound respect and admiration for your service."

The soldiers arrived at the Norman Armed Forces Reserve Center mid-morning Friday. They are the second group of soldiers from the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to demobilize after their deployment to Afghanistan and Kuwait.

About 40 members of the 45th combat team returned to Norman a week ago, the first of the approximately 3,000 soldiers to return to the state as part of the official demobilization.

Nearly 2,200 of those soldiers

Norman Transcript: Governor addresses Oklahoma Guardsmen at homecoming event

02/18/2012 09:15 AM CST

By Hannah Cruz, The Norman Transcript

NORMAN — Greeted by American flags and lots of applause, 32 soldiers with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned home to Oklahoma on Friday after deployment to Afghanistan and Kuwait.

Soldiers were addressed by Gov. Mary Fallin and Maj. Gen. Myles Deering, adjutant general for Oklahoma, at the Norman Armed Forces Reserve Center before embracing waiting and friends and families.

"Welcome home," said Fallin, to the gathered citizen-soldiers. "It's so great to have you home — there is no place like home. I think you can agree with me today: There's no place like Oklahoma."

His wife's fingers laced between his own, Master Sgt. David Hornback, stood in fatigues reunited with his family for the first time since last February.

A big grin on her face and unwilling to let go, Hornback's daughter, Emma, clung to his neck. Three

Funding Approved for Capitol Fitness Center

02/17/2012 11:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the board of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) for approving funds to create a fitness center at the state Capitol. Board members approved a \$38,500 proposal submitted by the governor, which includes a \$20,000 contribution from the

Oklahoma Hospital Association. The funds will largely be used for exercise equipment.

Fallin had proposed creating a Capitol Fitness Center in her annual State of the State address.

"Obesity is one of the major drags on the state's health indicators, and we're trying to lead by example at the Capitol by working out and improving our physical fitness," Fallin said. "My thanks go out to the board members of TSET as well as the Oklahoma Hospital Association for their support of this effort."

In her State of the State address, Fallin addressed Oklahoma's poor health indicators, saying that

KWTV News 9: Members of Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Return Home

02/17/2012 09:30 AM CST

By Darren Brown, News 9

NORMAN, Oklahoma - Over thirty of Oklahoma's Finest are back home this week after serving in Afghanistan and Kuwait.

Thirty-two members of Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were released back to their families in a short ceremony at Norman's Armed Forces Reserve Center.

Governor Mary Fallin joined Maj. General Myles Deering in welcoming back the troops. They thanked the troops and their families for their sacrifices.

Army Specialist Devon Kershner made a beeline to his new daughter as soon as the troops were dismissed.

"I actually didn't get to see her born," said Kershner. "It's awesome to see her again."

Kershner's daughter Desiree was born about four months after he left the country. Kershner's wife Lauren was excited to see her husband take on the role of new father.

"She's getting

Edmond Sun: Gov. Fallin scores big with speech

02/17/2012 09:15 AM CST

By The Edmond Sun

EDMOND — Gov. Mary Fallin defined her governorship on Feb. 6 and cemented her legacy as a leader. In her State of the State address, Fallin laid out her vision for how Oklahoma can grow or lead in several important areas.

Nowhere in that speech did she throw down the “my way or the highway” gauntlet to legislators or the people of Oklahoma. No, she truly offered a multi-point plan that offers opportunity for discussion that could bear rich fruit for our state.

Her speech was thoughtful, insightful and at times provocative. But nowhere was she more bold than in outlining her income tax elimination plan.

In offering an income tax reform plan that could take up to 15 years to fully implement, Fallin was careful to find ways to protect the state’s poorest and neediest citizens. She’s found a responsible way of approaching this necessary reform while putting everyone on notice that changes are

Woodward News: Grand opening for Siemens

02/17/2012 09:00 AM CST

By Rowynn Ricks, The Woodward News

Woodward, Okla. — State, local, and wind industry officials welcomed Siemens Energy to Woodward on Thursday.

The energy company held a grand opening ceremony Thursday afternoon for its new Woodward Wind Service Distribution Center, which is located by the West Woodward Airport.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin was among several state dignitaries who attended the event, as well as State Secretary of Commerce Dave Lopez and State Secretary of Energy Mike Ming and Corporation Commissioner Dana Murphy.

"We're just thrilled Siemens has chosen Oklahoma," Fallin said as she addressed the crowd of about 200 in attendance.

"We know you have other sites, other states, other locations," she said, describing it as a "competitive marketplace" for wind industry development throughout the nation.

But, speaking of Woodward, she promised the Siemens executives in

Tulsa World: Oklahoma's sales-tax collections for January hit record

02/15/2012 09:30 AM CST

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK, World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - General revenue sales-tax collections for January hit an all-time monthly record, the Office of State Finance said Tuesday.

Sales tax collections generated \$165 million in January, but the collection includes two weeks prior to Christmas, said Ron Jenkins, a spokesman for the office.

"This is the largest amount of money we have ever collected from sales taxes in any month of any year ever in Oklahoma," said State Finance Director Preston

Doerflinger. "Consumer confidence appears to be high early in the second half of the 2012 fiscal year."

State sales tax collections for January were up almost 12 percent from the same month a year ago.

"It is great news that sales tax receipts reached an all-time high and our economy is continuing to grow," Gov. Mary Fallin said.

"I am encouraging legislators to see this as an opportunity,

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma marks record in monthly sales tax collections

02/15/2012 09:30 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin made a push to legislators to support her personal income tax reduction and elimination proposal as revenue reports released Tuesday showed the state set an all-time monthly record for state sales tax collections.

"It is great news that sales tax receipts reached an all-time high and our economy is continuing to grow," Fallin said. "I am encouraging legislators to see this as an opportunity, not to grow government or to spend more on government bureaucracy, but to pursue a bold plan to cut taxes and allow Oklahomans to keep more of their hard-earned money."

Oklahomans went on a buying spree in late December and early January as sales tax collections for the state's general revenue fund, the main source of state funding, totaled \$165 million in January, the report shows.

"This is the largest amount of money we have ever collected from sales taxes

Associated Press: Governor touts natural gas vehicle conversion

02/14/2012 09:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin is honoring an Okarche-based company for converting its 2,000th vehicle to run on compressed natural gas.

Fallin held a ceremony Monday at the state Capitol to recognize OEM Systems, Inc., which converts gasoline or diesel-powered vehicles to run instead on compressed natural gas. The 2000th conversion was a state vehicle used by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture.

Fallin is one of a bipartisan group of governors from 10 states that have signed a memorandum promising to invest in natural gas vehicles in state automobile fleets. Its aim is to encourage U.S. automakers to produce natural gas fleet vehicles that will also meet public demand.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Oklahoma was the third-largest gas producing state in 2009 behind Texas and Wyoming.

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma company hits CNG milestone

02/14/2012 09:30 AM CST

BY JAY F. MARKS, Oklahoman

An Okarche company earned a commendation from Gov. Mary Fallin on Monday for converting 2,000 vehicles to run on compressed natural gas.

The milestone conversion by OEM Systems Inc. was a vehicle for the state Department of Agriculture.

Fallin praised OEM and Agriculture Secretary Jim Reese for their commitment to using natural gas, an abundant Oklahoma resource.

OEM has done most of its business on conversions with companies interested in saving money on fuel for their vehicle fleets, led by Chesapeake Energy Corp.

Chesapeake is in the midst of converting its entire 5,000-vehicle fleet to CNG. OEM already has converted about 1,250 vehicles for the Oklahoma City-based oil and natural gas company.

OEM owner Lisha Oshman credited Fallin with helping drive demand for CNG to another level.

In November, Fallin announced an initiative to spur investment in CNG technology by joining

Governor Mary Fallin Statement Regarding Water Rights and AG Motion for Stream Adjudication

02/10/2012 01:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General today filed an application on behalf of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) asking the State Supreme Court to assume original jurisdiction over a comprehensive stream adjudication to determine who has rights to the waters of three major stream systems in southeastern Oklahoma. The motion comes after the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations have aggressively pursued litigation in which they claim the right to all the waters in these streams.

Governor Fallin released the following statement concerning water policy and the action taken today by the state:

“My goal is to work with legislators, the tribes and other interested parties to develop a water policy that benefits all Oklahomans in all areas of the state. It’s an important

issue and we need to get it right, not just in the short term, but for our children and grandchildren as well. Oklahoma's water future affects

Journal Record: Right Thinking: Drawing battle lines over income tax

02/09/2012 11:30 AM CST

By Andrew C. Spiropoulos, Journal Record Guest Columnist

If you're the kind of person that likes to compare political debate to warfare, you'll appreciate that one way to understand the differences between the federal and the Oklahoma legislative processes is to compare them to how World War I and the Civil War were fought.

The federal legislative process, with its year-round schedule and well-paid and -staffed full-time legislators, is like World War I: a never-ending and steady diet of constant engagement – political trench warfare.

Our state's legislative process is more similar to the Civil War; each legislative session is like a particular campaign like those that culminated in the battles of Gettysburg or Antietam. The side that seizes the best ground is likely to prevail in battle. In our system, the governor, in her State of the State address and the submission of her proposed budget, has the first

Tulsa World: Rich or poor, both pay similar tax rate in Oklahoma

02/09/2012 11:00 AM CST

By WAYNE GREENE, World Senior Writer

Oklahoma's income tax system is flat on top and oddly graduated underneath.

On Monday, Gov. Mary Fallin announced a plan to cut the state's income tax system dramatically. Starting next year, Fallin wants the state's top income tax rate to be 3.5 percent. That rate would kick in on net income over \$70,000 a year for a married couple filing jointly.

The current comparable top rate is 5.25 percent, which kicks on net income over \$15,000 a year.

That's correct: The state's top tax bracket - and there are six other lower tax brackets - kicks in at \$15,000 a year, about \$80 a year less than the gross earning of someone working full time at the U.S. minimum wage.

If you file individually, the top rate kicks in on net income above \$8,700 a year, more than \$2,400 a year below the gross income of the poverty level.

A search through state law books

Norman Transcript: Governor, chancellor push higher grad rates

02/09/2012 11:00 AM CST

The Norman Transcript

NORMAN — Oklahoma has long had college students who leave campus before finishing their degrees. They leave to take jobs in order to support families, they get behind in studies and don't see a way out, or they just need a break. Additionally, some students are pushed into university studies before they are ready.

Dropping out is acceptable by many. It's a mindset many Oklahomans have that having some college hours is nearly as good as finishing a degree. Many entry-level jobs advertise "some college" preferred.

Oklahoma's Chancellor of Higher Education Glen Johnson and Gov. Mary Fallin hope to boost the number of college degrees handed out over the next 12 years.

Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Fallin want to count an additional 20,400 college graduates and certificates. Recruitment of students seems to be the easy part, as Oklahoma has enjoyed record enrollments over the past few years.

Governor Mary Fallin Names Steven Mullins as New General Counsel

02/09/2012 11:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Steven Mullins of Norman is her new general counsel. Prior to joining the governor's office, Mullins was an assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Mullins has an extensive legal background including positions in the U.S. Department of Justice as the Senior Legal Advisor for the Department of Justice in Kabul, Afghanistan and General Counsel to the 94 United States Attorneys. He was appointed the United States Attorney for the District of South Dakota by President George W. Bush and served in multiple positions for the U.S. Attorney's office for the Western District of Oklahoma including Executive Assistant, Civil Chief and Senior Litigation Counsel. He is also currently an adjunct law professor at the University of Oklahoma. Additionally, Mullins has instructed numerous training courses for the United States Department of

Gov Fallin Statement on Attorney General's Lawsuit To Stop Construction of Broken Arrow Casino

02/08/2012 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement concerning Attorney General Scott Pruitt's lawsuit to stop the construction of the Kialegee Tribal Town casino in Broken Arrow:

"While I share the concern that many Broken Arrow residents have over the construction of a casino in their community, my office is unfortunately left with no

legal way of blocking the project. The same does not hold true for our attorney general, however, and I am happy that Attorney General Pruitt has decided to take this matter to court. I certainly do not support the construction of a gaming facility which local residents do not want and which may have a negative impact on the community.

“Moving forward, it is my hope that state law can be adjusted to give the office of the governor greater flexibility in approving or denying gaming compacts of this nature.”

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

02/08/2012 10:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointments to the following boards and commissions.

Board of Agriculture

Ed Hurliman of Broken Bow is owner of Hurliman Forestry Services, a private forestry consulting business. He is the first forester to be appointed to the Board of Agriculture. Hurliman received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois. He is a current member of the Society of American Foresters and the Oklahoma Forestry Association. Hurliman also serves on the board of directors for the Oklahoma Forest Heritage Center, First National Bank of Idabel and on the Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Committee. Hurliman is replacing Don Britton and represents District 1. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Board of Governors of the Licensed Architects, Landscape Architects and Registered Interior

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma governor backs homeschoolers

02/08/2012 09:45 AM CST

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin says parents have the fundamental right to direct the education and upbringing of their children.

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin says she is pro-choice — when it comes to educating elementary and high school students.

The governor Tuesday told more than 2,000 homeschooled students and their parents gathered at the state Capitol that she supports their right and freedom for children to be taught at home.

“I support choice of having an education in public schools, in charter schools, in online studies and ... homeschooling,” said Fallin, who proclaimed this week as Oklahoma Home School Week.

She urged the students, who with their parents crowded onto the second-floor rotunda and looked down from the third- and fourth-floor rotundas, to study, stay out

of trouble, graduate and continue to learn. She said they should consider pursuing a college

Oklahoman: Oklahoma's energy plan could tip auto scales in favor of natural gas

02/08/2012 09:45 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, Oklahoman

Successful implementation of a key component of Oklahoma's energy plan may produce more affordable natural gas vehicles for the average car buyer, the state's energy secretary told a House committee Tuesday.

Part of the plan is asking other states to join in committing to buy natural gas vehicles for their fleets and seeing whether automakers would manufacture a car for them that also would be available for sale to individuals.

Energy Secretary Mike Ming, who led development of the plan, told members of the House of Representatives Energy and Utility Regulation Committee that Oklahoma and Colorado are spearheading the effort. Other states joining the effort to get more natural gas-powered vehicles on the road include Kentucky, Maine, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Utah, West Virginia, Wyoming and Texas.

The biggest market for natural gas vehicles is light-duty utility and delivery trucks, he said.

AP: Okla. Senate leaders share governor's goal of cutting income tax, stop short of endorsing plan

02/08/2012 09:30 AM CST

SEAN MURPHY, Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Republican leaders in the Oklahoma Senate said Tuesday they share Republican Gov. Mary Fallin's goal of reducing the state income tax, but stopped short of endorsing her plan to cut the top rate by nearly 2 percent beginning in January.

About 20 members of the 31-member Senate Republican caucus outlined their legislative priorities for the upcoming session at a press conference with reporters.

"Our agenda is pro-growth, with a renewed dedication to a government that is smaller, simpler and smarter, while still protecting services that are vital to our citizens," said Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman, R-Sapulpa.

Sen. Rick Brinkley, who has been leading an analysis of the state's tax structure, said Senate Republicans plan to give careful consideration to the recommendations of a task force that suggested a more modest cut in the state income tax

KWTV: Governor Fallin Proposes Plan To Open School Exercise Facilities To The Public

By Dana Hertneky, News 9

OKLAHOMA CITY _ Governor Mary Fallin Monday wrapped up her State of the State speech by talking about improving the health of Oklahomans. OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin wrapped up her State of the State speech on Monday by talking about improving our health. One of the ways she proposes to do this is by opening up school facilities to the public.

Like most schools across Oklahoma, in Bethany, once school is out the playground, track, and other exercise facilities are off limits.

"We do secure our facilities after the school day is over with," said Superintendent Kent Shellenberger. "One of the main reasons is for the liability reasons that are involved."

That's exactly why the Governor is proposing a minor change to the state's tort claim act that would release schools from liability if someone were to get hurt while working out on their property.

"To

Tulsa World: Put those out: Oklahoma Gov. Fallin bans tobacco use on all state property

02/07/2012 09:15 AM CST

BY WAYNE GREENE, Tulsa World Senior Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin signed an executive order Monday banning the use of tobacco products on state property.

The order gives state agencies six months to make sure tobacco, including smokeless tobacco, is not used in or on any state property, including buildings, land and vehicles.

Fallin announced the decision in her State of the State address Monday, adding to it the symbolic announcement that the smoking room at the state Capitol will be converted to a fitness center.

"Healthy living is important, not just because we want Oklahomans to live full and happy lives, but because the effects of unhealthy life choices hurt our economy, drain taxpayer dollars and drive up the cost of health care for everyone," Fallin said

Oklahoma is ranked 48th in the nation in overall health indicators, which Fallin said was unacceptable.

Secretary of Health and

Associated Press: Governor Fallin Proposes Tax Cuts, Improvements To Bridges, Capitol Building

02/07/2012 09:15 AM CST

By The Associated Press

Governor Mary Fallin addresses the legislature during her State of the State address Monday. OKLAHOMA CITY - Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin laid out a long list of challenges facing Oklahomans during her State of the State speech Monday, but also praised how well the state has done considering the economic crisis faced by the entire country.

In her address to kick off the 2012 legislative session, Fallin proposed deep cuts to the income tax that would take effect on January 1, 2013. Her plan would cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year, and it's not clear exactly how Fallin would offset the lost revenue.

She says she plans to pay for the tax cut by eliminating "tax loopholes, carve-outs and other exceptions," but the governor's office has not released details on which exemptions would be eliminated.

Under Fallin's plan, those earning \$30,000

Tulsa World: Fallin touts tax reform

02/07/2012 09:00 AM CST

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK, Tulsa World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin on Monday outlined her plan to reduce and simplify the state's income tax rates.

"Today, I'm asking our lawmakers to join me in an ambitious and exciting undertaking, the passage of a bold tax reform plan that will represent the most significant tax cut in state history," Fallin said during her second State of the State address delivered to a joint legislative session assembled in the House chamber.

The Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act would cut income taxes in all brackets, simplify the tax code and move toward elimination of the income tax, the governor said.

The plan would reduce the current tax system from seven brackets to three beginning in 2013, she said.

Couples making \$30,000 or less annually would not pay state income taxes, Fallin said. Those making \$30,000 to \$70,000 would pay a 2.25 percent tax

The Oklahoman: Gov. Mary Fallin details state personal income tax reduction plan

02/07/2012 08:45 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

Oklahoma couples making more than \$70,000 a year would see their state personal income tax rate drop nearly in half and families making up to \$30,000 a year would pay no state personal income taxes under a plan Gov. Mary Fallin proposed Monday to lawmakers.

“Over time, our income tax would be phased out for every Oklahoman,” she said.

Fallin provided details of her personal income tax reduction in her State of the State address to a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The 49-minute speech kicked off this year's legislative session, which runs through late May.

Fallin called for reducing the number of brackets in the personal income tax code from seven to three. The income brackets range from individuals making up to \$1,000 to individuals earning \$8,700 and over. The rates range from one half of 1 percent of taxable income to 5.25 percent.

The

[Journal Record: Fallin sets her course](#)

02/07/2012 08:45 AM CST

By M. Scott Carter, Journal Record

OKLAHOMA CITY – Republican Gov. Mary Fallin called on state lawmakers to flatten the state's income tax rate, restore funding for teachers' health benefits, refill the state disaster fund and provide more money for road and bridge improvements during her State of the State speech Monday.

Fallin also issued a second terse response to leaders of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations. She said she would request more money to hire the very best counsel to defend the state against the tribes' joint lawsuit over the Sardis Lake Reservoir.

Previously, the governor sent a joint letter to both tribal leaders calling on them to withdraw their lawsuit.

“As you know, the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations have sued the state of Oklahoma concerning who owns the water in 22 counties,” the governor said Monday. “We continue to hope this issue can be settled through mediation, without

[The Oklahoman: Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin signs order to ban tobacco use on state property](#)

02/07/2012 08:45 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

Tobacco products at all state-owned and leased properties and in state-owned and leased buildings and vehicles will be banned effective July 1 under an executive order signed Monday by Gov. Mary Fallin.

The announcement drew applause, but groans were heard seconds later in the House of Representatives chamber when she announced the ban would mean the closing of a smoking room in the state Capitol for lawmakers and employees.

"You're going to like this one, too," she joked as she announced the smoking room, in the Capitol's basement, would be remodeled — at no expense to the state — into a small fitness center. The state is seeking a grant from the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust and the Oklahoma Hospital Association has agreed to match it, Fallin said.

The governor announced she had signed the tobacco ban during her State of the State speech to lawmakers, which kicks

Wall Street Journal: The Heartland Tax Rebellion

02/07/2012 08:30 AM CST

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin is starting to feel surrounded. On her state's southern border, Texas has no income tax. Now two of its other neighbors, Missouri and Kansas, are considering plans to cut and eventually abolish their income taxes. "Oklahoma doesn't want to end up an income-tax sandwich," she quips.

On Monday she announced her new tax plan, which calls for lowering the state income-tax rate to 3.5% next year from 5.25%, and an ambition to phase out the income tax over 10 years. "We're going to have the most pro-growth tax system in the region," she says.

She's going to have competition. In Kansas, Republican Governor Sam Brownback is also proposing to cut income taxes this year to 4.9% from 6.45%, offset by a slight increase in the sales tax rate and a broadening of the tax base. He also wants a 10-year phase out. In Missouri, a voter initiative that is expected to qualify for the November ballot would abolish

The Oklahoman: Gov. Mary Fallin goes large with this year's State of the State speech

02/07/2012 08:30 AM CST

Gov. Mary Fallin goes large with this year's State of the State speech

The Oklahoman

SMALL things dominated Barack Obama's State of the Union speech. In her 2012 State of the State speech, Gov. Mary Fallin went large.

Eliminating the personal income tax is as large as a governor can get, yet that's what Fallin focused on Monday. She said Obama's oversized government could learn some things from her smaller government:

“In Oklahoma, we could teach Washington a lesson or two about fiscal policy, the role of government and the proper size of government.”

Now Fallin must teach us how to pay for services if we don't tax incomes. Her plan cuts the seven tax brackets to just three and exempts most lower-income taxpayers entirely. This neuters the argument that tax cutting does nothing for the poor.

Tax cuts, and reform of the tax code, are expected to dominate the 2012 legislative session.

Governor Mary Fallin Delivers State of the State Address, Outlines 2012 Agenda

02/06/2012 01:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released her budget for Fiscal Year 2013 and outlined her legislative and policy agenda. Her agenda and budget were presented to a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature during her State of the State address.

A full text of the governor’s speech can be read [here](#).

A PDF of the governor’s budget is available [here](#).

The following are key excerpts from the State of the State address:

On Oklahoma’s economy ([click here](#) for a one-page report)

“In 2011, the state of Oklahoma had a net increase of 41,600

Oklahoma Now: Job Creation, Innovation and Education: My 2012 Agenda

02/06/2012 12:30 PM CST

Job Creation, Innovation and Education: My 2012 Agenda

By Governor Mary Fallin

On the first day of the legislative session the governor has the privilege of delivering the “State of the State” address to a joint session of the Oklahoma legislature. This gives the governor a unique opportunity to report on the overall health of the state and to introduce a forward-thinking agenda. The following are excerpts from my State of the State address, in which I outline a plan help create more and better jobs, eliminate government waste, improve our schools and the quality of our workforce, and focus on innovative solutions to several problems facing the state.

A bold plan for income tax reduction

“The Oklahoma Tax Reduction and Simplification Act will immediately cut income taxes for Oklahomans in all tax brackets, simplify the

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on the Appointment of Terri White as Interim Director at DHS

02/03/2012 06:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the appointment of Terri White to the position of interim director of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The appointment was made by the Oklahoma Commission of Human Services (OCHS). White is currently the commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS)

“Commissioner White has an outstanding record of service at the Department of Mental Health. Her experience, both in providing services to Oklahomans in need as well as in managing a large agency, will serve her well as the new interim director at DHS. I applaud the Commission for making a swift and bold decision to quickly find an interim director, as well as outgoing Commissioner Howard Hendrick for his support in the matter.

“I am confident that Terri will not only competently manage this period of transition at DHS, but will also pursue improvements in

Watch the Governor's State of the State Address Online

02/03/2012 10:30 AM CST

The governor will deliver the State of the State Address at approximately 1 p.m., Monday, Feb. 6.

Check your local TV listings for viewing times. You also can view the speech online at the following locations:

Oklahoma House Web site: www.okhouse.gov

OETA: www.oeta.tv

KOSU radio: www.kosu.org

Additionally, some radio stations will carry the speech, including those on the Oklahoma News Network.

The Oklahoman: Gov. Mary Fallin discusses plan to cut Oklahoma's income tax rate

02/03/2012 08:30 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin said Thursday she will unveil plans next week to simplify the state's tax code and cut personal income tax for most Oklahomans.

The governor said her proposal, which she has been working on for five months, would not require an increase in other taxes. She hopes to make up for the lost revenue mostly by closing loopholes in the tax code, eliminating various tax credits and making state government more efficient.

"I believe this will be one of the boldest tax reform plans we've seen in our state's history. It will give us one of the lowest income tax rates in our nation. It will be a significant tax reduction for a majority of all Oklahomans, and I think it will be a game-changing moment for our state," she said.

The plan would provide tax relief for the 2013 tax year and calls for the gradual reduction of the personal income tax through economic growth triggers,

Tulsa World: Gov. Fallin proposes income tax cut in Oklahoma

02/03/2012 08:30 AM CST

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK, Tulsa World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin said Thursday that she is proposing an income tax cut for the majority of Oklahomans.

"I believe this will be one of the boldest tax reform plans we have seen in our state's history," Fallin said. "It will give us one of the lowest income tax rates in our nation."

More details are expected to be released Monday when the governor gives her State of the State address to a joint session of the Legislature.

Several measures dealing with taxes have already been filed for consideration by lawmakers when they return to the Capitol for the second session of the 53rd Legislature.

Fallin said her proposal will be funded largely by eliminating several tax credits. She is expected to release a specific list Monday.

"We are not going to eliminate all of them, but we are certainly providing a

Governor Mary Fallin Responds to American Airlines Business and Restructuring Plans

02/01/2012 04:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement addressing American’s announcement regarding future business and restructuring plans:

“American’s announcement today represents a commitment to continuing a large presence in Oklahoma and, specifically, Tulsa. Their communications with

employees and with my office indicate they are working to preserve as many jobs as possible, and that Tulsa will not be left out of American's restructuring plans. All of this is good news.

"Unfortunately, however, the state will necessarily lose some jobs during the restructuring process. Any time men and women in Oklahoma lose their jobs it is difficult for those individuals, their families and their communities. It is also difficult for me. Today is no exception. My heart goes out to those who now face an uncertain future.

"However, many of these employees have unique and valuable skill sets

Governor Fallin Announces Reappointment of Oklahoma State Banking Commissioner

01/27/2012 12:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the reappointment of Mick Thompson as the Oklahoma State Banking Commissioner. He will serve a four-year term beginning in September pending Senate confirmation.

"Mick Thompson's extensive work in both the private and public financial sector will serve him well as he works to ensure Oklahoma's banks remain on strong financial footing," Fallin said. "Having served in three previous administrations, Mick brings many years of experience and knowledge to the Banking Department and we look forward to his continued service as commissioner."

Thompson was first appointed as the banking commissioner in 1992 by Governor David Walters. He was reappointed by both Governor Frank Keating and Governor Brad Henry. Prior to his appointment, he was the executive vice president of Central National Bank in Poteau. Thompson served in the Oklahoma House of

Governor Fallin Extends Hay Hauling Waiver

01/26/2012 10:30 AM CST

Because of severe drought conditions across Oklahoma, Governor Fallin has extended the temporary waiver on hay hauling restrictions.

The current extension runs through March 12, 2012.

[Click here](#) to read the governor's executive order temporarily removing restrictions on hay hauling.

Tulsa World: State Chamber hears Fallin tout strength of state's economy

01/25/2012 03:00 PM CST

BY WAYNE GREENE, Tulsa World Senior Writer

Oklahoma's economy is growing, and the rest of the nation is starting to pay attention, Gov. Mary Fallin told business leaders Tuesday night.

"Oklahoma is serious about creating the best business climate possible," she said at the State Chamber of Oklahoma's Legislative Kickoff Reception at Southern Hills Country Club.

The event - meant to reinvigorate local business involvement in the State Chamber - drew legislative leaders, business executives and elected officials from around the state.

Fallin said she recently returned from a trip to New York City, where she took the good news about Oklahoma's economy to bond rating agencies that will determine the state's cost of borrowing money.

Since the beginning of last year, the state has seen a net increase of 38,400 jobs, the second-fastest rate of job growth in the nation, Fallin said.

Governor Mary Fallin Reacts to State of the Union Address

01/24/2012 09:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement following President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address:

"Tonight we heard the same thing from President Obama that we've been hearing since he took office: proposals for more spending and bigger government. Like in previous speeches, the president paid lip service to reducing the federal deficit, but has not presented a serious plan to do so.

"Unfortunately, it is American families and businesses that are bearing the brunt of these failed policies and stale ideas. Almost two million more Americans are out of work today than when the president was sworn in. Even when his administration is given a golden opportunity to aid in significant economic growth – as was the case with the proposed Keystone XL pipeline and its 20,000 shovel-ready jobs – it is squandered. Unfortunately, it seems the president is intent

KOTV Channel 6: Baker Hughes To Expand Claremore Facility, Add Jobs

01/24/2012 03:15 PM CST

CLAREMORE, Oklahoma - Oklahoma's economy is getting a jolt from an oilfield services company. Baker Hughes announced it is investing \$36-million into a new research and development building in Claremore.

Tuesday, Governor Mary Fallin toured the current facility and saw firsthand the plans for the expansion, which means top jobs for the Sooner State.

It's full steam ahead for an oil services company's growth in Claremore. A year after Baker Hughes announced it would be adding more than six-hundred jobs, the company unveiled plans to expand its facilities.

"It's really a long term investment. We're looking at developing technologies for the next 10-20 years," said Luis Moncada, Vice President of Baker Hughes.

In the current facility, employees man machines that make an artificial lift, which literally helps lift oil and gas to the surface.

"This Oklahoma division is working all over the world

Tulsa World: Fallin speaks to elementary students, officials at Tulsa Air and Space Museum

01/24/2012 03:15 PM CST

BY D.R. STEWART, Tulsa World Staff Writer

Gov. Mary Fallin told 40 elementary school children and a couple dozen aerospace officials on Tuesday that Oklahoma's aerospace industry needs talented science, technology, engineering and mathematics students.

Speaking at a press conference at the Tulsa Air and Space Museum to promote the 2012 Aviator Ball, Fallin said the future is bright for young people at the state's 500 aerospace companies.

"As I look out over you children today, I will ask, 'How many of you would like to fly this airplane?'" Fallin said, gesturing behind her at the museum's Ranger 2000 trainer.

Forty young students from Celia Clinton Elementary School raised their hands.

"How many of you like to play video games?" Fallin asked.

Forty young hands shot skyward.

"If you like to play video games, the cockpits of these

Nominate an Unsung Hero to Be a 2012 Recipient for One of the Highest Civilian Honors

01/19/2012 02:15 PM CST

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation is accepting nominations for the *Citizen Service Before Self Honors*, which recognizes and honors Americans for extraordinary acts of courage and selflessness.

Citizen Service Before Self Honors are presented to unsung heroes the fewer than 90 living recipients of our nation's highest award for valor - the Medal of Honor. *Citizen Service Before Self* Honorees represent the values of courage, sacrifice, and selfless service.

Governor Fallin and the Medal of Honor recipients encourage individuals to nominate any U.S. civilian who has clearly demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice

for others whether through a single act of extraordinary heroism at risk to one's life or through a prolonged series of selfless acts.

The nominee's actions must epitomize the concept of "service before self" and must be performed "above and beyond"

Oklahoma Companies Make Fortune Top 100 List for 2012

01/19/2012 11:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY — Fortune Magazine recently released their annual list of 100 Best Companies To Work For and four Oklahoma companies are ranked as the nation's best.

Chesapeake Energy, ranked 18th, Devon Energy, ranked 28th, American Fidelity Assurance, ranked 47th and QuikTrip, ranked 66th all made this prestigious annual list.

The company ranked number one was Google, which recently opened a data center in Pryor, Oklahoma ([Click here](#) to watch the video "Google is A-OK with Oklahoma" on CNNMoney.com).

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, who is hosting Oklahoma companies on the "100 Best" list at a luncheon at the Governor's Mansion next month, said the companies showcase the state at its very best.

"Innovation, a quality work force and a great quality of life are things

Governor Fallin Comments on Reports that Obama Administration Will Reject Keystone XL Pipeline

01/18/2012 11:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today released the following statement following media reports that President Obama's administration will reject TransCanada's application to build the Keystone XL pipeline:

"If the reports are true that President Obama will reject the application for the Keystone XL pipeline, it's a sad day for those of us who care about American energy independence and job creation.

"Independent reports show Oklahoma anticipates a \$1.2 billion economic investment in the state. Nationally, 20,000 construction jobs and as many as 250,000 jobs are expected to be created.

"The decision by the president to block construction of this pipeline is more evidence this administration is beholden to radical environmentalists and does not care about real job creation or the plight of tens of millions of unemployed Americans. I am outraged by President Obama's obstructionism, poor

Enid News: Oklahoma's Gov. Fallin, other leaders are seeking to improve state's bond ra

01/18/2012 09:30 AM CST

By the Enid News and Eagle

Oklahoma leaders, headed by Gov. Mary Fallin, plan to go to New York on Thursday to seek to improve our state's bond ratings.

We certainly hope they are successful.

It appears they will have plenty of ammunition in seeking the boost in ratings.

Right now, Standard and Poor's and Fitch Ratings have Oklahoma at their second-highest rating, AA+.

Moody's Investor Services has Oklahoma at its third-highest rating, AA2. The highest rating for all three is AAA.

The officials going along with Fallin, including Treasurer Ken Miller, Office of State Finance Director Preston Doerflinger and State Bond Adviser Jim Joseph, will point out plenty of positives Oklahoma has going for it.

For one, the state has a balanced budget.

Also, they will point out Oklahoma's impressive growth in state revenues in recent months, low unemployment and the \$500 million

Governor Fallin to Lead State Delegation to New York to Meet with Bond Rating Agencies

01/17/2012 10:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin will lead an Oklahoma delegation to New York City on Thursday, Jan. 19, to discuss the possibility of improving the state's bond ratings. Joining the governor will be state Treasurer Ken Miller, Preston Doerflinger, director of the Office of State Finance and secretary of finance in the governor's cabinet, and State Bond Advisor Jim Joseph.

The group will meet with officials from the leading bond rating agencies, including Standard and Poor's Corporation, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investor Services. The agencies issue ratings which are used by investors as an indicator of the worthiness of a government's debt and its borrowing capacity. The ratings influence the terms and rates of state-held bonds.

"Our meeting with bond advisors gives us a great opportunity to showcase Oklahoma's strong economy and fiscally sound policies," Fallin said. "Unlike the

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

01/16/2012 09:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:

“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached a message of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity that is just as relevant today as it was when he lived. He was a patriot who believed in the great potential of the United States of America and the message of freedom and equality of opportunity for which it still stands. I encourage all Oklahomans to join me in remembering and honoring Dr. King’s legacy on the 26th anniversary of the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is this Monday, January 16. The governor’s office will be closed in observance of the holiday.

Governor Fallin Announces Appointment of Joy Hofmeister to the State Board of Education

01/13/2012 02:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Joy Hofmeister to the Oklahoma State Board of Education. She will serve on an interim basis pending Senate confirmation. Hofmeister is replacing Philip Lakin, Jr., who resigned. She will serve the remainder of Lakin’s term through April of 2015 as a member from Congressional District 1.

“Joy has spent her entire adult life working in the field of education,” Fallin said. “She is a teacher with hands-on classroom experience, an executive with private sector experience, and a researcher with a passion for finding ways to improve our schools and boost student performance. Her experience, dedication and passion for reform will serve her well on the State Board of Education.”

Hofmeister is a former public school teacher who currently serves as the CEO of Kumon of South Tulsa, a local franchise of the international firm that provides math

The Oklahoman: Keystone XL project ready to go in Oklahoma, official says

01/11/2012 10:45 AM CST

Gov. Mary Fallin writes letter to President Barack Obama urging him to approve Keystone XL pipeline.

BY JAY F. MARKS, The Oklahoman

The proposed Keystone XL pipeline is expected to create about 1,200 construction jobs in Oklahoma if the Obama administration approves the project, the man responsible for the \$7 billion project said Tuesday.

Keystone Pipelines Vice President Robert Jones said the pipeline is an important piece of infrastructure that will link the large crude oil basin in northern Alberta with U.S. refining centers on the Gulf Coast.

Jones said pipeline could even move oil from the storage hub at Cushing, where a supply glut has reduced the price for oil produced in this region.

“We've offered an expansion of the system before it's even put in the ground to move more oil out of Oklahoma,” said Jones, who spoke Tuesday to the Rotary Club in Oklahoma City.

Keystone developer

Oklahoma Farm Report: Governor Fallin to President Obama- Approve Keystone XL NOW!

01/11/2012 10:15 AM CST

Wed, 11 Jan 2012 05:42:30 CST

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today sent a letter to President Barack Obama asking him to immediately approve the development of TransCanada's Keystone XL Pipeline, a project which would transport oil from Canada to multiple points within the United States including the Gulf of Mexico. Under current law, the president has until February 21 to declare the pipeline “not in the national interest” or it is automatically approved. (Click on the PDF link at the bottom of this story to view the letter sent by Governor Fallin to President Obama)

The governor's request followed a visit from TransCanada executives to Oklahoma City. Robert Jones, Vice President for Keystone Pipelines at TransCanada, today met with Fallin as well as executives from Oklahoma oil and gas firms including Devon Energy, Continental Resources, MidContinent Oil and Gas Association of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma's economy continues to outpace projections

01/11/2012 10:15 AM CST

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

State general fund collections recorded double-digit growth in December and for the first six months of this fiscal year, according to reports released Tuesday.

All major categories of revenue collections were up by double digits in December, except sales taxes, according to revenue reports issued by the state finance office.

Sales tax collections produced \$153.5 million, or 5.7 percent more than a year ago, but came in below estimates. Sales tax collections for December came in 0.4 percent below projections. The sales tax collections covered actual and estimated sales for the last 15 days of November and the first 15 days of December.

“More Oklahomans had jobs this Christmas than in 2010,” state Finance Director Preston Doerflinger said. “But the sales tax figures for the first part of the holiday shopping period indicate our citizens were prudent in their spending, just as we need to

Governor Fallin to President Obama: Approve Keystone Pipeline Now

01/10/2012 05:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today sent a letter (attached) to President Barack Obama asking him to immediately approve the development of TransCanada’s Keystone XL Pipeline, a project which would transport oil from Canada to multiple points within the United States including the Gulf of Mexico. Under current law, the president has until February 21 to declare the pipeline “not in the national interest” or it is automatically approved.

The governor’s request followed a visit from TransCanada executives to Oklahoma City. Robert Jones, Vice President for Keystone Pipelines at TransCanada, today met with Fallin as well as executives from Oklahoma oil and gas firms including Devon Energy, Continental Resources, MidContinent Oil and Gas Association of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association. Jones also spoke with members of the Rotary Club of Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma City

New Health Insurance Options Now Available for Children

01/09/2012 03:30 PM CST

Statewide open enrollment period ends Feb. 29

OKLAHOMA CITY – New health insurance options are now available for Oklahoma children age 1 through 18 who need their own individual policy. A special initial statewide enrollment period is open until Feb. 29 for these “child-only” policies. While coverage has always remained available for children through family insurance plans, child-only policies are needed for the small percentage of children who are without private coverage for the entire family and who don’t qualify for government programs.

“This is a great opportunity for parents and guardians looking to insure their children with child-only health insurance products,” said Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin. “I am extremely pleased these policy options are now coming back to Oklahoma.”

The lack of child-only

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

01/06/2012 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the following appointments to the Health Care Workforce Resources Board, Oklahoma Funeral

Board, Hospice Advisory Board, Hospital Advisory Committee and the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

Health Care Workforce Resources Board

Phyllis Carson of Weleetka is an administrator at Arbor Village in Sapulpa, a long-term care and rehabilitation center. She previously worked as a social worker for Child Protective Services in Okfuskee County. Carson earned a bachelor's degree in education from Northeastern State University. She is replacing Marietta Lynch and represents the long-term care industry on the board. Senate confirmation is not required for her appointment.

Oklahoma Funeral Board

Cindy Longanacre of Chickasha is administrator and co-founder of Ross Health

New Interstate 40 Crosstown opened in Oklahoma City

01/05/2012 01:00 PM CST

Drivers received the gift of a century with the grand opening of the new I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City Thursday, Jan. 5, to “unwrap” the first segment and celebrate the first time the public has travelled the much-anticipated highway.

Governor Mary Fallin, U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, U.S. Rep. James Lankford, Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez, Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley, Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and Oklahoma City Chamber Board of Directors member Carl Edwards were on hand for the celebration Thursday when the eastbound lanes were opened. Westbound lanes are expected to be open in several weeks.

The economic importance of the approximately \$680 million project was highlighted with a convoy of vehicles representing companies, many of them Oklahoma based, that depend on I-40 and other highways to transport goods. Oklahoma's future drivers were also part of the celebration with the Linwood Elementary Choir

Governor Fallin Statement Regarding Boeing Relocations from Wichita to Oklahoma City

01/04/2012 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding The Boeing Company's decision to close the Boeing Defense, Space and Security facility in Wichita and to transfer engineering operations to Oklahoma City:

“This is a difficult time for Boeing employees who have been impacted by the decision to close the Wichita facility, and my heart goes out to those men and women. However, as with the recent relocation of Boeing staff from California to the Boeing Oklahoma City facility, our state stands ready to welcome all employees and their families who will now call Oklahoma home. Oklahoma City is a wonderful

community and a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. I know Boeing employees will agree.”

“My administration has worked very closely with The Boeing Company to ensure that Oklahoma has both a competitive business climate and a high quality of life for any employees that might be located

Oklahoma Now - A Year to Remember: Looking Back at 2011

12/30/2011 02:30 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

The New Year has arrived, and it promises to be an exciting period for Oklahoma. With an economy on the rebound and another promising legislative session on the horizon, there are plenty of reasons to have high expectations for 2012. In next month's column, I plan on outlining some of our plans for the state and the various ways my administration is working to bring more and better jobs to Oklahoma.

This month, however, I'd like to take a look back at 2011, an historic and important year. In many ways it was a challenging year as well. The state continues to recover from the loss of nearly 80,000 jobs due to the last recession. And, of course, we faced a \$500 million budget shortfall that required agencies to tighten their belts, make sacrifices and find ways to operate more efficiently and effectively.

I'm proud to say the state rose to the challenge. To stimulate the economy, we passed a

Governor Fallin Statement on Passing of Dr. Ernest Holloway

12/30/2011 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today on the passing of Dr. Ernest Holloway, former president of Langston University:

“Dr. Ernest Holloway was a talented and committed educator who provided steady leadership for Langston University as the longest serving president in the school's history. A Hall of Fame educator, Dr. Holloway left a legacy in the lives of the students he shaped and the hearts of those who knew and loved him. My prayers and deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends during this time of loss.”

In honor of Dr. Holloway, the governor has ordered that flags on state property be flown at half-staff from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. today. Funeral services have been set for 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 30, on the campus of Langston University. Dr. Holloway passed away Dec. 24.

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

12/23/2011 02:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the State Board of Career and Technology Education, Board of Regents for the

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, Teachers' Retirement System Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents of the Tulsa Community College.

State Board of Career and Technology Education

Marilyn Harrel of Weatherford is on the board of directors at the Bank of Western Oklahoma. She has taught at Putnam City and Leedey Schools. Harrel received a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University. She is being reappointed and will represent the third Congressional District. Senate confirmation is required for her appointment.

Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges

Lou Watkins of Stillwater is a former college professor and department chair. She

Governor Mary Fallin Wishes Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season

12/23/2011 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement wishing Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and happy holiday season:

“The Christmas and holiday season is a special and wonderful time of year. I am looking forward to spending the next few days with my family, celebrating the meaning of Christmas, and reflecting on the many wonderful gifts bestowed on us by God. I want to wish all Oklahomans a Merry Christmas and a wonderful, joyous holiday season on behalf of my entire family.”

Note: The Governor's office will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Tuesday, December 27 in observance of the Christmas holiday.

Governor Fallin Applauds AT&T Gift to Oklahoma National Guard Soldiers

12/21/2011 11:45 AM CST

Company Gives 3,600 Calling Cards So Guard Members Deployed Overseas Can Call Home

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded AT&T Oklahoma for its gift to members of the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) who are deployed overseas to Afghanistan and Kuwait. AT&T is donating 3,600 calling cards so members of the Guard who are serving in Afghanistan and Kuwait can call home to visit with family and friends. The governor joined AT&T representatives and members of the military at a ceremony this morning to present the cards.

“We owe a tremendous amount of thanks to the members of the Oklahoma National Guard for their sacrifice and service to our great nation. Being away from family and friends is always challenging, especially during the holiday season. I want to thank

AT&T Oklahoma for their generosity and support of the members of the 45th Infantry

Governor Mary Fallin Comments on Certified Revenue Figures

12/20/2011 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today issued the following statement on the Oklahoma Board of Equalization certified revenue figures. The governor will have \$6.5 billion to craft her FY 2013 budget, an increase of \$120.3 million over the previous year.

“The numbers certified by the Board of Equalization today indicate that tax revenues are increasing as Oklahoma’s economy continues its rebound from the national recession. That’s the good news. The loss of one time funding sources, however, means the state is currently facing an estimated budget shortfall of \$150 million. While that number may change, the bottom line is that next year’s budget will be flat at best. Moving into 2013, state agencies should redouble their modernization and efficiency efforts to ensure they are maximizing the value of their appropriated funds and saving taxpayer dollars.”

Fallin Praises New Plan to Reduce Prescription Drug Costs for HealthChoice Members

12/16/2011 11:15 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded an action taken today by the Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board (OSEEGIB) that will save taxpayer dollars and reduce prescription drug costs for thousands of consumers in Oklahoma. The plan was originally submitted by the Pharmacy Providers of Oklahoma (PPOk) as a way to reduce prescription drug costs while retaining a level playing field between local independent pharmacies, chains and mail service pharmacies. Total savings are estimated at \$13.1 million per year for the state, as well as a total of \$19.8 million in total savings for the 163,000 thousand prescription drug consumers currently enrolled in Health Choice plans.

Under the new proposal, Oklahoma pharmacists will offer deeper discounts on all drugs for Health Choice Plans resulting in savings to the plan and the members, which include many teachers, state employees, retirees, including all

Governor Mary Fallin, Superintendent Barresi Statements on RTT-ELC

12/16/2011 10:30 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin and State Superintendent Janet Barresi today issued the following statements in reaction to a White House announcement that Oklahoma will not be included on the list of Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant winners.

Gov. Mary Fallin:

“Oklahoma delivered a strong application, and my thanks go out to State Superintendent Janet Barresi, Education Secretary Phyllis Hudecki and the many other individuals who worked to put it together. It is disappointing the Obama Administration has once again chosen not to name us as a Race to the Top grant winner.

“Despite today’s news, Oklahoma remains a leader in the field of early learning. With over 70 percent of our four year olds participating in some form of early learning program, it will continue to be important to develop and improve our pre-kindergarten services. Today’s announcement does

Governor Mary Fallin Responds to EPA Smog Reduction Plan

12/15/2011 03:00 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today responded to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plan to reduce regional haze and control emissions at three Oklahoma power plants. The EPA posted the plan to their website after rejecting a proposal to reduce regional haze put forward by the state of Oklahoma earlier this year.

“It is frustrating and disappointing that the EPA continues to move forward with a federal plan that will raise costs for ratepayers and utility companies, leave less money in the pockets of Oklahomans and push our economy in the wrong direction. The EPA’s plan could drive utility rates significantly higher in the next five years, something that many citizens cannot afford, especially during a recession.

“Fortunately, there continue to be signs that the federal government may be open to a regional haze reduction plan proposed by the state of Oklahoma and designed to address the environmental, health and economic

State Banking Board Votes to Lower Assessment Rates for 2012

12/14/2011 03:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the Oklahoma State Banking Board has voted to lower the assessment rates paid by all state-chartered banks in Oklahoma. The Board took action at its Nov. 30 meeting in response to the increased costs that Oklahoma banks are incurring as a result of federal regulatory changes.

The assessment rates were lowered 22 percent for a bank’s first \$100 million of assets. The rates take effect Dec. 31, 2011. The Board reasoned this reduction in state regulatory assessments may help offset federal regulatory costs that are increasing, as well as help community banks devote more capital to community-based lending.

“What Washington doesn’t seem to understand is that burdensome overregulation can stifle economic growth and job creation. The state Banking Board’s move will

free up Oklahoma's community banks to devote more capital to community-based lending to

Oklahoma Now: The Oklahoma First Energy Plan

12/05/2011 04:15 PM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

Oklahoma has always been a leader in producing American energy. With one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, we're also doing a great job of creating American jobs. At a time when many other states are experiencing high unemployment, Oklahoma is continuing to see strong economic growth, and the energy sector has been an extremely important part of that success story.

Oil and natural gas companies support over 300,000 jobs in the state. In many ways, the industry represents Oklahoma's economic backbone. Renewable energy, like wind power, is also growing quickly, employing over 3,000 Oklahomans and adding \$13 million a year in property tax and land lease payments. Washington should take note: Oklahoma is seeing economic stimulus, job

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on American Airlines Filing Chapter 11

11/29/2011 04:45 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement concerning the decision by the parent company of American Airlines to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection:

“As the largest private sector employer in Tulsa, American Airlines is an extremely important part of the Oklahoma community. The company has long and deeply rooted ties to the city and the state, both of which provide the kind of good business climate and educated aerospace workforce the industry requires. Despite the recent announcement, I'm confident that AA and Tulsa will continue their great relationship, and my office stands ready to help in any way it can.”

Fallin spoke to American Airlines executives earlier today to express both concern and optimism for the future.

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Thanksgiving Holiday

11/24/2011 09:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the Thanksgiving Holiday:

“Like many Oklahomans, I'll be spending time this Thanksgiving with my family and close friends. It's a time of celebration, and also a time of reflection as we remember all that we have to be thankful for. I am personally thankful for the many blessings that God has bestowed on me

and my loved ones, and I am humbled to have the honor of serving as governor of this great state. I know I also join Americans everywhere in being thankful to be a citizen of this great nation, which has been a symbol of hope and freedom since

Governor Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance in Wake of Oklahoma Earthquakes

11/22/2011 03:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration to help individuals, families and businesses in Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties recover from the impacts of a series of damaging earthquakes that began on November 5 and have been followed by more than 75 aftershocks.

“Oklahoma has seen its share of natural disasters this year, including the recent earthquakes in Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties,” Governor Fallin said. “If our request is approved, individuals, families and businesses impacted by the earthquakes will be eligible for federal assistance.”

The governor requested federal aid through FEMA’s Individual Assistance program. If approved, the program makes funding available for homeowners, renters and business owners in the form of grants and low-interest loans as well as disaster housing assistance and other necessary disaster expenses. Other counties could be added

Governor Fallin’s Second-Annual ‘Feeding Oklahoma’ Food Drive a Success

11/22/2011 02:30 PM CST

More than 1.6 Million Meals Raised to Fight Hunger in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that her second-annual “Feeding Oklahoma” food drive exceeded the goal of raising food and funds to provide 1 million meals for hungry Oklahoma families this holiday season. The food drive raised more than \$233,000, collected more than 552,400 lbs of food, which will provide more than 1,627,000 meals. The 2011 food drive more than doubled the 700,000 meals provided during last year’s food drive.

“Oklahomans are the most caring and giving people around and they proved it by answering the call to participate in the ‘Feeding Oklahoma’ food drive,” Fallin said. “I want to thank all our generous corporate sponsors and everyone who brought in food items. Your willingness to help our families and neighbors embodies the ‘Oklahoma Spirit’ that makes our state

Okla. Proclaims November Marine Month

11/16/2011 08:45 AM CST

Marine Corps News, by Sgt. Drew Hendricks

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Past and present Marines gathered to hear Gov. Mary Fallin, Governor of Oklahoma, proclaim November as Marine Month in the Blue Room at the Oklahoma State Capitol building here, Nov. 9.

Fallin made the proclamation in honor of the Marine Corps birthday, Nov. 10, 1775, and in honor of the men and women of Oklahoma who have proudly bore the title.

"The Marine Corps has served our nation since its founding during both good times and times of war," she said. "The people of Oklahoma are very appreciative of what you do for our nation and the state of Oklahoma."

During the proclamation ceremony Fallin also participated in the traditional cutting of a Marine Corps birthday cake as the guest of honor, along with Maj. Richard Robinson, III, commanding officer, Recruiting Station Oklahoma City.

"It was a great honor for the governor and the people

AP: Fallin, other governors share economic development strategies

11/15/2011 10:00 AM CST

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Governors and state economic development officials are sharing tips and strategies for how to attract businesses and create jobs.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam noted at a National Governors Association meeting in Nashville on Monday that it's a "very, very competitive world" when it comes to recruiting investors, both domestically and globally.

Haslam was joined at the conference by Govs. Dave Heineman of Nebraska, Haley Barbour of Mississippi and Mary Fallin of Oklahoma.

The Republican governors said states can help lure businesses by reducing workers' compensation obligations, making regulations less onerous and limiting damages from civil lawsuits.

Barbour said curbing lawsuit damages was key to Mississippi.

Gov. Fallin Celebrates the Release of the America the Beautiful Chickasaw Oklahoma Quarter Dollar

11/15/2011 09:45 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today is letting Oklahomans know about the release of the Chickasaw National Recreation Area Quarter on November 14, 2011. The release of the Chickasaw Quarter marks the tenth release in the America the Beautiful Quarter Series, a twelve-year program honoring the National Parks and sites throughout the United States and Territories.

According to details released by the United States Mint, the Chickasaw National Recreation Area Quarter Launch Ceremony will be held in Flower Park in Sulphur, Oklahoma, on Wednesday, November 16 at 11 a.m. C.T. Governor Fallin

encourages residents to visit the public ceremony, and celebrate both the release of the coin and the 104th Anniversary of Oklahoma's statehood.

A visit to the Chickasaw National Recreation Area provides residents the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature through driving tours, hiking & biking, watching wildlife, fishing

Gov. Fallin Statement on SC Decision to Hear Arguments on Pres Obama's Health Care Reform Law

11/14/2011 12:15 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to hear arguments on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), President Obama's controversial health care law:

"President Obama's health care law is unconstitutional and unaffordable. Not only will it limit choice and undermine the quality of American health care, it stands to cost the state of Oklahoma about half a billion dollars in the process.

"Our citizens have already passed a constitutional amendment blocking its implementation in Oklahoma, and it's clear that a majority of states are similarly opposed to the mandates, new taxes, and out-of-control spending proposed in the law.

"The Supreme Court should strike down the president's health care reform as unconstitutional as soon as possible. The uncertainty surrounding the

Governor Mary Fallin, Secretary Aragon, Comment on Veterans Day

11/10/2011 05:00 PM CST

Department of Commerce Report Shows Massive Economic Impact of Oklahoma Military Bases

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today thanked veterans and active duty military personnel for their service, and asked all Oklahomans to set aside time on Veterans Day to honor and pray for our troops.

"We owe our veterans and our active duty military men and women a debt we can never repay," Fallin said. "Their courage and sacrifice have allowed America to serve as the beacon of freedom and hope that it is today."

"This November 11, I would ask all our citizens to join me in thanking our veterans for everything they have done for this country and for the people of Oklahoma. Please also say a prayer for the many men and women who are overseas continuing to fight for freedom and democracy."

Oklahoma Secretary of Veterans Affairs Rita Aragon thanked military personnel and veterans for their unique

Altus Times: Fallin sites ‘good news’ for state

11/10/2011 09:00 AM CST

By Paula Peterson, Altus Times

Governor Mary Fallin didn't let the cloudy weather Tuesday, Nov. 8 keep her away from Southwestern Oklahoma. She and her professional crew came to the Rotary Luncheon, along with Sen. Mike Schulz and Rep. Charles Ortega, who was Rotarian of the Day. Ortega introduced Fallin to the huge crowd who had come to hear speak and visit with her.

Those seated with Fallin at the head table were: Altus Chamber of Commerce; Secretary/Treasurer: Rollann Horschler, First National Bank; Rodger Kerr, Chamber of Commerce Chair, Business and Industry Director at Southwest Technology Center; Chamber of Commerce President Holley Urbanski; Altus Rotary President: David Player, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Altus; Altus Mayor David Webb, State Farm Insurance; Sen. Mike Schulz and Rep. Charles Ortega.

Fallin, who'd been out driving across Oklahoma Monday when the tornadoes and at least one earthquake hit,

Journal Record: Fallin signs pact to push natural gas vehicles

11/10/2011 09:00 AM CST

By D. Ray Tuttle, The Journal Record

OKLAHOMA CITY – In a coordinated effort with the governor of Colorado, Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin launched an initiative to increase the use of natural gas vehicles in state automobile fleets.

Fallin made the announcement Wednesday during the Governor's Energy Conference in Oklahoma City. Fallin and Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper signed a memorandum of understanding, stating a desire to purchase functional and affordable NGVs for use in state fleets. The memo is a first step in a comprehensive statewide energy plan released jointly by Fallin and Hickenlooper.

Tom Price, senior vice president of corporate development and government relations for Chesapeake Energy Corp., praised the move. Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake, the second-largest producer of natural gas in the U.S., looks to fast-track development of NGV fueling infrastructure. The company made an announcement this year that it will invest

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin aiming to increase CNG options

11/10/2011 09:00 AM CST

By Jay F. Marks, The Oklahoman

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin is teaming up with governors of three other natural gas-producing states in an effort to make vehicles that run on compressed natural gas more readily available.

Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming and Pennsylvania on Wednesday confirmed their desire to buy functional and affordable natural gas vehicles for their state fleets.

Fallin said she and her fellow governors intend to commit to purchasing 5,000 natural gas vehicles a year to establish demand for such vehicles and spur carmakers to design and build a suitable CNG sedan.

“States have tens of thousands of fleet automobiles,” Fallin said, “and by partnering with car manufacturers to bring an affordable and functional NGV to market, we’re helping the products and infrastructure for cleaner, more cost-effective transportation.

“This initiative has the potential to be a true ‘game

Governor Fallin Signs Agreement with Other States Seeking Increased Use of Natural Gas Vehicles

11/09/2011 10:30 AM CST

NGV Initiative is First Step in “Oklahoma First” Energy Plan

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today announced a new initiative launched jointly with Governor John Hickenlooper of Colorado designed to increase the use of natural gas vehicles (NGVs) in state automobile fleets. Other states, including Wyoming and Pennsylvania have also signed onto the agreement. Additional states have also been invited to join.

Each participating governor signed onto a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) circulated by Fallin and Hickenlooper stating a desire to purchase functional and affordable NGVs for use in state fleets.

The MOU lays the groundwork for the formation of a Multi-State Request for Proposal, where the states would prepare a formal request to automobile manufacturers to design an NGV and sell it in bulk to participating

Journal Record: Fallin previews clean-energy initiative

11/08/2011 03:15 PM CST

By D. Ray Tuttle, The Journal Record

BROKEN ARROW – Gov. Mary Fallin said on Monday she will announce a major clean-energy initiative creating hundreds of jobs in Oklahoma and several other states.

Fallin previewed her energy initiative while addressing 435 government and civic leaders at a Broken Arrow Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Monday at the Broken Arrow campus of Northeastern State University.

Fallin will make the announcement with Democrat Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper.

“We have been working on this energy plan for more than a year now,” Fallin said during an impromptu press conference after her remarks to the Broken Arrow Chamber. “This has involved many folks from the private sector and not just oil and gas, but from renewable-energy areas like wind – all forms.”

The plan will create jobs for Oklahomans and encourage investment in the state, Fallin

Supporting Our Troops: Building the Thunderbird Chapel at Camp Gruber

11/08/2011 10:00 AM CST

By Governor Mary Fallin

Throughout our nation’s history, our liberty has been secured by the men and women of the Armed Forces. Because of their heroism at home and abroad, we live today in a nation where our citizens can freely pursue their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to those who have served and those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. But we hope our remembrance in some way pays tribute to their valor. That’s why on Veterans Day we pay respect to those who have worn the uniform of this great nation.

I’m happy to also be a part of another effort to honor the men and women of our military: the construction of the new Thunderbird Chapel at Camp Gruber in eastern Oklahoma.

Camp Gruber, for those who don’t know, is Oklahoma’s largest National Guard training facility and the premiere National Guard

Governor Mary Fallin Statement on the Passing of Judy Copeland

11/07/2011 02:30 PM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Judy Copeland, who served as general counsel in the office of Governor Mary Fallin, passed away early Sunday (11/6) morning after suffering a stroke on Thursday (11/3). Judy was 42. She is survived by her loving husband, Dr. Terry Copeland. Details on funeral arrangements are pending.

Previously, Judy had worked as assistant district attorney in Oklahoma County, assistant attorney general under Drew Edmondson and Susan Loving, deputy general counsel and general counsel for Governor Frank Keating, and assistant United States attorney in the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Judy attended Northeastern State University as an undergraduate prior to graduating from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. She was born in Stroud, Oklahoma.

Governor Fallin released the following statement:

“Judy was a strong, professional woman and a friend to all who worked with her. She was a superb general counsel as

Oklahoma Governor’s Energy Conference to Take Place on Wednesday, November 9 in OKC

11/04/2011 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin is encouraging those interested in the future of American-made energy to attend the Governor’s Energy Conference this Wednesday, November 9. The conference will be held from 8 am to 4 pm at the Cox Business Center in Oklahoma City and is sponsored by the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy, the Meinders School of Business, and the Karl F. and June S. Martin Family Foundation.

“The Governor’s Energy Conference will feature some of the most impressive and innovative minds in the industry as well as key policy makers,” Fallin said. “This is a time for energy leaders to get together, learn from each other’s experiences and chart a path forward for Oklahoma’s energy future.”

The conference features input and presentations from leading natural gas industry executives, prominent national experts from MIT and the Colorado School of Mines, and other industry

Governor Fallin’s Second Annual Food Drive Kicks Off Today

11/01/2011 01:15 PM CDT

Oklahomans Unite to Provide 1 Million Meals for the Hungry Statewide

OKLAHOMA CITY – Today, Governor Fallin launched her second annual “Feeding Oklahoma” food and fundraising drive to benefit the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, and their partner agencies across the state.

“No one should have to go hungry during the Holiday Season,” Fallin said. “By collecting a million meals for families in Oklahoma, we’re helping to make sure they won’t have to. I’m encouraging everyone who can to get involved in this food drive, to collect non-perishable food items or to make a monetary donation to help the hungry. I’ve always said that Oklahomans are the most generous and caring people in the world, and this is one more opportunity to showcase that community spirit.”

The goal of “Feeding Oklahoma” is to raise enough food

Governor Fallin Declares November “State of Creativity Month”

10/28/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has declared November 2011 as “State of Creativity Month” in Oklahoma. The governor credited Creative Oklahoma for their efforts to enhance Oklahoma through events designed to showcase the state’s creativity.

“Creative Oklahoma has worked tirelessly to establish Oklahoma as a world-renowned center of creativity and innovation,” Fallin said. “Their efforts have contributed to the economic and cultural growth of our state. In addition to Creative Oklahoma’s efforts, several events in the month of November led to my decision to make November the ‘State of Creativity Month’ in hopes it will inspire our state to think of innovative solutions to our problems.”

The “State of Creativity Month” will kick off with the Oklahoma Creativity Forum on Tuesday, Nov. 1, at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Norman. The Oklahoma

Governor’s Burn Ban to be Lifted Tuesday, November 1

10/28/2011 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today that the Governor’s Burn Ban currently in effect for 14 Oklahoma counties will be lifted effective Tuesday, November 1 at 1:00 p.m. Waiting until Tuesday allows county commissioners time to assess local conditions and meet to consider the need to implement a burn ban in their county.

“With cooler temperatures and higher humidity we are seeing a lower occurrence of wildfire,” said Governor Fallin. “These factors combined with recent precipitation across the state allow the ban to be lifted.”

Oklahomans are encouraged to remain cautious with campfires, debris burning, outdoor cooking, welding and other activities that include an open flame.

“Even with the rains we have received, extreme drought continues for most counties in Oklahoma,” said State Forester George Geissler. “Everyone should be weather aware and

Governor Fallin Announces Second Annual Statewide Food Drive from Nov. 1 – Nov. 22

10/26/2011 01:45 PM CDT

2011 Goal for Feeding Oklahoma is to Provide 1 Million Meals

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin’s second annual “Feeding Oklahoma” food drive and fundraising effort kicks off statewide on November 1. The goal this year is to raise 1 million meals to help feed hungry families, children and seniors

during the holiday season. Donations benefit the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, and their partner agencies across the state.

“In Oklahoma, one in four children are at risk of going hungry every day,” Fallin said. “That’s not something we can ignore. Last year, Oklahomans proved why they are considered the most caring and giving people around by donating over 700,000 meals to the Feeding Oklahoma food drive. This year, we’re working to increase that number to a million meals. With the holidays approaching, now is a great time to give back

Governor Fallin Statement on New House DHS Strategy

10/19/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released a statement today after House Speaker Kris Steele and other legislators announced the formation of a new group dedicated to improving results at the Department of Human Services (DHS). The House group will meet with DHS officials and propose reforms to governance structure, agency structure, personnel policy and resource allocation.

“When I appointed Brad Yarbrough and Wes Lane to the DHS commission, I asked them to pursue reforms that would allow the agency to better protect our children and increase accountability, transparency and efficiency. The goals outlined today by Speaker Steele, a bipartisan group of legislators, and agency officials is the logical next step in that process,” Fallin said. “As a state, we must all work together to prevent the abuse and neglect of our most vulnerable citizens. That’s especially true when it comes to child abuse and the heart-breaking deaths

Oklahoma Women Veterans Recognition Day and Event Set for Oct. 29

10/19/2011 11:00 AM CDT

Oklahoma Women Veterans to Gather in Oklahoma City

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs will host the 27th annual Oklahoma Women Veterans Recognition Day on Saturday, Oct. 29, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 1815 S. Meridian Ave., in Oklahoma City.

The event is a joint venture for the state and federal Veterans Affairs departments and is one of the largest women veterans outreach programs in Oklahoma. The 2011 program co-chairs are U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. (ret.) Pam Bloustine and U.S. Army Reserves Master Sgt. (Ret.) Phyllis Dorough-Barker.

This year’s program features a variety of speakers including: U.S. Air Force Major General (Ret.) Rita Aragon, Oklahoma secretary of military and veterans affairs; Dr. Patricia Hayes, chief consultant for the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group at the Department of Veterans

Southern States Energy Board Elects Governor Fallin as Chairman

10/19/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Southern States Energy Board (SSEB), the regional spokesman for the American South on energy and environmental issues, has elected Governor Mary Fallin of Oklahoma as its new Chairman for 2011-2012. The SSEB is comprised of governors and state legislators from 16 states and two territories.

Governor Fallin was the unanimous choice of state delegations to succeed Governor Bob McDonnell of Virginia, who has effectively rallied southern states in support of onshore and offshore oil and gas drilling; standing up to EPA on an avalanche of new rules and regulations that further threaten American jobs and the economy, and supporting an “all of the above” attitude on energy resources.

“I am honored to be elected as the new Chairman of the Southern States Energy Board,” Governor Fallin said. “This organization was formed by governors and legislators in 1960 and has an excellent reputation for its

Governor Mary Fallin will travel to the Oklahoma Panhandle on Oct. 18

10/17/2011 09:45 AM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin will travel to the Oklahoma Panhandle on Tuesday, Oct. 18 for a day – long tour that will include stops at five different places spanning across three different counties. She will be accompanied by Rep. Gus Blackwell.

On her first stop, the governor will be in Boise City at the Cimarron County Conservation District Office for breakfast. From there, Governor Fallin will travel to Guymon and attend a luncheon at the Pickle Creek Event Center. Following lunch, she will stop by the Commissioner’s of the Land Office (CLO) Auction at the Texas County Fairgrounds. After the auction, the governor will go to Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) to speak with President David Bryan, faculty and students. On her final stop, Governor Fallin will speak at the Oklahoma Economic Development Authority in Beaver.

“I am excited to get back to the Panhandle and visit with folks about the issues that matter most to them,”

Governor’s Burn Ban to Change Tuesday

10/14/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that the Governor’s Burn Ban will be modified effective Tuesday, October 18 at 1:00 p.m. This change is due to rainfall across portions of the state over the past week. Most county commissioners meet Monday and can assess local conditions and consider independently implementing countywide burn bans at that time.

Fourteen counties remain under the Governor’s Burn Ban: Atoka, Beaver, Beckham, Bryan, Choctaw, Cimarron, Coal, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, McCurtain, Pushmataha,

Texas, and Tillman. Additional County Commissioner bans are in effect (click here for a map of current burn bans).

“Parts of Oklahoma remain under extreme drought conditions and the threat of wildfire remains a concern in those counties,” said Governor Fallin.

Unlawful activities under the ban include open flames, campfires, bonfires, and setting fire to trash, grass, woods or other materials

U.S. Senators Seek Input from Governor Fallin, NGA Executive Committee on Deficit Reduction and Budg

10/13/2011 03:00 PM CDT

Governors Discuss National Legislative Priorities for 2012, Federal Legislation Impacting State Budgets

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined other members of the National Governors Association (NGA) Executive Committee for a day of meetings in Washington, D.C., to discuss legislative priorities and federal legislation impacting the states and state budgets. The governor also met with a group of U.S. senators who previously served as governors.

The Executive Committee discussed potential legislative policies on issues such as the economy, health care, education and public safety. The governors also discussed what the possible impact to state budgets would be from any budget cuts proposed by the congressional “Super Committee.”

The former governors now serving as U.S. senators sought input from the NGA Executive Committee on deficit reduction and how Washington can utilize tax dollars more

Governor Fallin, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma Honor House Speaker Kris Steele

10/12/2011 02:45 PM CDT

Award recognizes Steele’s contributions as a Big and supporter of Amachi program

OKLAHOMA CITY – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma (BBBSOK) and Governor Mary Fallin presented the first-ever Big Brothers Big Sisters Governor’s Award to House Speaker Kris Steele during an event Wednesday, Oct. 12 at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Steele has served as a Big in the organization since 2010 and is a major supporter of the BBBSOK Amachi program, which provides mentoring to children of incarcerated parents.

“I am very thankful for the influential, positive role models in my life as a child. Unfortunately, not every Oklahoma child experiences such blessings. I became a Big because I believe it is important to help children who, by no fault of their own, have been left without a steady, positive presence in their lives,” said Steele, R-Shawnee. “I am honored to accept this award on behalf of everyone who

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments to Judicial Nominating Commission

10/05/2011 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Ed Crocker and Lee Evans to the Judicial Nominating Commission. Each appointee will serve a six-year term. Senate confirmation is not required.

Members of the commission nominate candidates for appointment by the governor to fill vacancies on the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court of Appeals, District and Associate District judgeships, and the Workers' Compensation Court.

The commission has 15 members. Six members are to be lawyers elected by the Oklahoma Bar Association, one selected from each of the six Oklahoma congressional districts as they existed in 1967. Six non-lawyer members are appointed by the governor, also from the six congressional districts. The remaining three appointees, also non-lawyer members, are selected by the Speaker of the House, the Senate President Pro Tempore and a majority vote of the Judicial Nominating

Oklahoma Now: New Transportation Plan Vital for Economic Success & Job Growth in Oklahoma

10/05/2011 10:45 AM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

I have said many times before that my first priority as governor is to bring more and better jobs to the state of Oklahoma. To that end, I've worked with other lawmakers to develop and implement a series of job creating initiatives that will help to deliver the kind of business-friendly environment that leads to private sector job growth.

This week, I am announcing the next step in that pro-jobs agenda: the "Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan."

Having safe, modern and easily traveled roads and bridges is important for commuters, for commerce and for job creation. As my secretary of transportation once told me, businesses don't want to locate on a dirt road. They want a modern transportation infrastructure servicing their needs.

Unfortunately, the state of Oklahoma's bridges have long been an impediment to economic growth. For years, Oklahoma

Governor Mary Fallin to Attend Fortune's & Most Powerful Women's Summit

10/04/2011 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin will attend the 13th annual Fortune Most Powerful Women Summit in Laguna Niguel, CA from October 4-5.

The summit is a three-day event sponsored by Fortune that includes seminars, workshops and lectures with other women leaders in business, government, academia, philanthropy and the arts. While in attendance, Governor Fallin will join former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm in a panel discussion on Wednesday titled, “Governing in the Age of Austerity.” Fortune’s Nina Easton will serve as the discussion moderator.

“The Fortune Most Powerful Women Summit features a dynamic and diverse group of female leaders in business, public service, media and more,” Fallin said. “I’m looking forward to representing the great state of Oklahoma and sharing our story with some of the most influential people in the world. This is a unique opportunity for me to market our state as a great

Gov. Fallin Encourages Oklahomans to Support Victims of Domestic Violence by Wearing Purple Oct. 6

10/04/2011 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin, the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (OCADVSA) and Verizon Wireless Oklahoma are encouraging Oklahomans to wear purple this Thursday, October 6th to show support for victims and to raise awareness of domestic violence.

“Domestic violence has wide-ranging effects in our state on families, children and most importantly the victims,” Fallin said. “I applaud the efforts of the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, as well as Verizon Wireless Oklahoma, for their work supporting victims and raising awareness. I encourage all Oklahomans to show their support for the victims of domestic violence by wearing purple on Thursday, October 6.”

Wear Purple Day in Oklahoma is Thursday, October 6 and is one of the public awareness events planned in October by Verizon Wireless Oklahoma and OCADVSA for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The

Governor Fallin Unveils Plan to Revamp State Bridge System

10/03/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced a new initiative to target and fix all 706 of the Oklahoma state highway system’s currently identified structurally deficient bridges by 2019. Oklahoma has frequently and notoriously topped national “bad bridge” lists. Fallin’s new “Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan” would, upon completion, bring the number of currently known structurally deficient highway bridges to less than one percent and make Oklahoma a national leader in that area.

Her plan also calls for projects that would significantly reduce congestion on the Creek and Kilpatrick turnpikes. These improvements would be made without increasing taxes or tolls. Fallin said the historic number of upcoming infrastructure

improvements will benefit safety, commerce and travel in Oklahoma for decades to come.

“Having a safe, reliable and modern transportation infrastructure is important for

KRMG: Circuits now singing at Google server farm near Pryor

09/30/2011 09:30 AM CDT

By Paul Crockett, KRMG

TULSA, Okla. — Google’s server farm at the Mid-America Industrial Park just south of Pryor is up and running. Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin was on hand for the official connection that was made just before 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoon.

The facility had been scheduled to go online a few years ago but that was put on hold when the economy took a nose dive in 2008. 106 people are now employed at the facility and more may be hired as the search engine giant expands.

Google’s Joe Kava, the senior director of data center and construction for the search engine giant, says the center at Pryor is very efficient. “This data center is operating at about half of the overall power of a typical data center this size.”

Kava says the Pryor site had the right mix of people, power and property for one of their data centers. “So everything came together and ultimately

Tulsa World: Google plugs in data center in Pryor

09/30/2011 09:30 AM CDT

PRYOR - With the ceremonial connection of a data cable into an input jack, the Google data center in Pryor officially powered up for business Thursday afternoon.

The event, attended by Gov. Mary Fallin, Google Senior Director of Operations Joe Kava and Secretary of Commerce Dave Lopez, marked the culmination of the Internet giant's long-planned investment in the area.

Fallin praised the Mountain View, Calif., company for choosing Oklahoma as one of its sites for growth.

"There are other states you could have invested in," she said. "So on behalf of the state, I want to say thank you for having the confidence to invest in Oklahoma."

The 130,000-square-foot data center, which will power a variety of Google's services, now employs 106, but that number should grow, Kava said.

"There's been a much greater demand for our services," he said.

Although the data center just opened,

KOTV: Google Data Center Opens In Pryor

09/30/2011 09:15 AM CDT

Emily Baucum, News On 6

PRYOR, Oklahoma -- Google opened its new high tech data center in Mayes County Thursday.

With lots of fanfare, free T-shirts, even Oklahoma's own Google Doodle, the internet giant moved into its new home. No introduction's necessary.

"The go-to place. Always. Google it, Google it," said Beatrice Robinson, Pryor Teacher.

An invitation so exclusive, guests won a lottery to get past the front gate.

"You cannot board the bus to come here without it," said Tulsa resident Cathy Butler.

Google hired more than 100 people to work here. Inside the building are servers. Lots of them. Working around the clock to power Google's massive search engine.

"Right now you probably notice that those search results are pretty fast. The reason that we get those really quick search results is that we have data centers near our users," said Joe Kava of

Governor Fallin, Emergency Management Officials Announce Safe Room Rebate Program

09/27/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin kicked off the Sooner Safe - Safe Room Rebate Program today during a news conference at the Oklahoma Capitol. With this announcement, more than \$1 million in rebates were made available to Oklahoma homeowners for the construction of individual safe rooms and storm shelters. Officials anticipate the funding will help deliver about 500 safe rooms.

"I urge all Oklahomans to take every step possible in preparing for severe weather," Fallin said. "Safe rooms offer an invaluable way to protect your family during a storm and the Sooner Safe - Safe Room Rebate Program can help Oklahoma homeowners in accomplishing that goal."

The program is a partnership between the state and federal government. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) delivered the funding, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management will manage the program, and OK.gov is administering the Web site portal where

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to the State Board of Education

09/27/2011 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the new composition of the State Board of Education. All of the appointments are filling new positions that are four-year terms and require confirmation from the Senate.

The State Board of Education consists of seven members and is chaired by State Superintendent Janet Barresi. Each of the appointed members will represent a congressional district, with one being an at large member.

One vacancy remains for the appointee representing the third congressional district. Governor Fallin is working to fill that vacancy as quickly as possible.

“These men and women are dedicated public servants and business people who know the value of quality education in Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “I’ve charged each one of them with pursuing and implementing reforms that will boost student performance and ultimately help us to create the kind of educated, highly skilled workforce that

Governor Fallin Issues Proclamation Supporting Early Childhood Literacy

09/27/2011 11:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today proclaimed the week of Sept. 26 through Sept. 30, 2011 as Early Childhood Awareness Week in Oklahoma and stressed the importance of supporting early childhood literacy in the state. Together with Reach Out and Read Oklahoma, she encouraged parents to read daily to their child from an early age to prepare them for school success.

“Reading with your children is a fun, family activity that helps young learners develop the language skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and throughout their entire school career. I applaud Reach Out and Read Oklahoma and I encourage all parents to spend as much time as they can reading with their young children,” Fallin said.

After reading a proclamation (click here to view the proclamation), Gov. Fallin read “Green Eggs and Ham” by Dr. Seuss to a group of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students from St. John Christian

Governor’s Office Launches Redesigned Web site

09/26/2011 12:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Office of Governor Mary Fallin today announced the launch of a redesigned governor’s Web site at www.governor.ok.gov. The new site features a template layout that is brand new to Oklahoma statewide elected officials and features panoramic banner graphics, photo and multimedia galleries, and social media connectivity.

“Internet and Web-based technologies are great tools that allow citizens to interact and communicate directly with their elected officials,” Fallin said. “Our new site is easy-to-navigate and will keep Oklahomans up to date on information from the governor’s office while allowing them to communicate with my office directly.”

The Web site has a more modern feel, as well as a more functional and navigable layout. Visitors can stay current with Governor Fallin and the governor's office, whether it's following her

Governor Fallin To Amend Burn Ban

09/26/2011 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Due to recent rainfall across Oklahoma, Governor Mary Fallin will amend the burn ban in central Oklahoma. Effective Tuesday, September 27, at 1 p.m. the ban will be modified to cover 28 counties: Atoka, Beaver, Beckham, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Cimarron, Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnston, Kiowa, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, Murray, Pontotoc, Pushmataha, Roger Mills, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, and Washita.

Statewide, most county commissioners meet Monday and will have a chance to assess local conditions and consider their own countywide burn bans at that time.

“The drought continues to persist across Oklahoma, but the recent light rains have given some counties a temporary reprieve from extreme fire conditions,” Fallin said. “Individual counties can utilize more localized data, conditions and fire occurrence to decide if burn bans are called for on a county

Governor Fallin Receives Economic Development Report, Thanks Committee Members

09/23/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Members of Governor Fallin's volunteer task force on economic development and job creation presented her with their report titled, “Bold Ideas for Oklahoma.” Taskforce members include private and public sector workers, CEO's and job-creators from across the state. The committee was lead by Bob Sullivan, owner of Sullivan and Company, a Tulsa oil and gas company.

In the report, the task force identified areas and outlined strategies Oklahoma could consider to further improve the business climate in the state and attract more jobs and investment.

“I very much appreciate the leadership and service of the members of this task force,” Fallin said. “This is a great conversation starter on how we can make Oklahoma the ‘go-to place’ to do business.”

Suggested policies in the report include the elimination of the state income tax, the conversion of state fleet vehicles

Governor Fallin on Monday to Appear as Panelist in National Education Summit

09/23/2011 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin on Monday will serve as a panelist during NBC's Education Nation summit in New York City. Governor Fallin and a

handful of other governors were selected to participate in a panel titled, “The State of Education: The Governor’s Perspective.”

The panel, hosted by NBC News’ Brian Williams, will focus on education and economic competitiveness. Other participating governors include: Gov. Lincoln Chafee (RI); Gov. Nathan Deal (GA); Gov. Bill Haslam (TN); Gov. John Hickenlooper (CO); Gov. Paul LePage (ME); Gov. Jack Markell (DE); Gov. Bob McDonnell (VA); Gov. Sean Parnell (AK); and Gov. Scott Walker (WI).

“It’s great that Oklahoma is being recognized for our efforts to improve education and I’m excited to represent our state at this event,” Fallin said. “My top priority is creating a business environment in Oklahoma that promotes job

Governor Fallin, Higher Education Officials Unveil College Degree Completion Plan

09/22/2011 03:30 PM CDT

Plan to Increase Number of Oklahomans with College Degrees Hailed as a National Model

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and higher education officials today announced a new higher education initiative to increase the number of Oklahomans who have college degrees. Currently, state colleges and universities annually award 30,500 degrees. The initiative aims to increase that number 67 percent so that by 2023 Oklahoma colleges and universities will annually award 50,900 college degrees.

Addressing members of her cabinet, higher education officials and others today at the University of Central Oklahoma, the governor provided details of an approach that builds upon the Complete College America (CCA) national initiative.

“My top priority as governor is to create a business environment in Oklahoma that fosters economic growth and job creation. Ensuring we have a highly skilled, college educated

Forbes: Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin Shows Washington How It's Done

09/22/2011 10:45 AM CDT

On a trip across the country to recruit new business to Oklahoma, January-appointed Governor Mary Fallin stopped by Forbes to speak with me last month. Well, more like hobbled. In a flaming-red power suit she limped on two crutches to the boardroom table, still recovering from a July hip surgery. “It’s a little embarrassing,” she confided. But she’s set big goals on her agenda, and a little limp won’t stop her.

Fallin, the first female governor of Oklahoma, started her career in the private sector and got so fed up with government policies, decided to enter politics in 1990. She later spent 12 years as a lieutenant governor before being elected to the U.S. Congress in 2006. With her buddy Michele Bachmann, she was one of just two

Republican women elected that term. Today, she's one of only six female governors in the U.S.

In her first year, Fallin boasts that Oklahoma's budget is balanced, its unemployment rate is

Governor Fallin Announces SBA Assistance for Fires in Oklahoma, Pawnee Counties

09/21/2011 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that Oklahoma and Pawnee counties have been declared disaster areas by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for the recent wildfires. Specifically, the declaration is for the Oklahoma County fires that occurred August 30 through September 1 and the Pawnee County fires that occurred August 7-14.

Under the declaration, 11 contiguous counties also are eligible for assistance.

The designation provides SBA low-interest disaster loans for renters, homeowners and business owners to repair or replace any property damaged by the fires which was not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. The loan program also is available to assist businesses that sustained economic injury due to the fires.

Governor Fallin Announces Oklahoma Will Submit Application to Early Learning Challenge Grant Contest

09/20/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi today announced that Oklahoma will submit an application tailored to Oklahoma's unique strengths as a leader in early childhood education to the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program. RTT-ELC is a \$500 million state-level grant competition aimed at improving early childhood education. Under RTT-ELC, participating states submit a detailed application to the United States Department of Education, outlining their plans to improve upon early childhood education. Should Oklahoma be chosen as a winner, the state would be eligible for a grant of up to \$60 million.

Oklahoma is considered a national leader in early childhood learning, with the largest number of four-year olds per capita enrolled in voluntary pre-kindergarten classes in the nation. Approximately 75% of Oklahoma 4-year-olds enroll in pre-kindergarten programs. Quality early

Governor Fallin Makes Appointments to the Unmanned Aerial Systems Council

09/15/2011 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today appointed 13 people to the Unmanned Aerial Systems Council (UASC). Each member is serving at the pleasure of the governor.

The UASC will review all development of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and related technologies in the state. The council will act as an advisor to the governor on all issues related to UAS, including education, economic development, job creation and investments. Secretary of Science and Technology Dr. Stephen McKeever will serve as chairman of the council.

“Oklahoma has the potential to be the number one place in the country for UAS research and development,” Fallin said. “The team we’ve put together on this council will help to solidify Oklahoma’s potential as a national leader in this field.”

The Unmanned Aerial Systems Council

Dennis Altendorf of Edmond is the director of aerospace

Governor Fallin Makes Appointments to the State Election Board

09/14/2011 02:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today named Stephen Curry, Thomas Prince, Jim Roth, Jerry Buchanan and Dr. Tim Mauldin to the Oklahoma State Election Board.

The Oklahoma State Election Board is the administrative agency for the conduct of state elections and the oversight of the state’s 77 county election boards. Whereas the board was previously composed of three members only, legislation passed in the 2011 session (SB 931) added two additional alternate members. The alternate members represent each party and may attend any meeting that a member for whom the person is an alternate is unable to attend.

Each member will begin serving immediately on an interim basis. They will each serve four year terms that require confirmation from the Oklahoma Senate.

Members

Steve Curry of Oklahoma City is the brokerage director at Mass Mutual. He earned a

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

09/14/2011 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Physicians Advisory Committee, Board of Managers of CompSource Oklahoma, Advisory Council on Workers’ Compensation, Used Motor Vehicle and Parts Commission, State Fire Marshal Commission, Board of Private Vocational Schools,

Commission for Teacher Preparation and Capitol – Medical Center Improvement and Zoning Commission.

Physician Advisory Committee

Dr. William Gillock has served on the committee since 2004. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, Tulsa and earned a master's in public health from the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health, Oklahoma City. While Gillock had previously served as an appointee of the Senate Pro Tempore, under new legislation he is now filling a position appointed by the governor.

Dr. John A. Munneke

Governor Fallin Statement on 10th Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks

09/11/2011 12:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks:

“The world changed forever 10 years ago when a terrible attack was perpetrated on our nation. On September 11, the horrors of terrorism were brought to our doorstep and we were reminded our freedoms make us a target for the enemies of liberty.

“Oklahoma experienced tragic loss during our own terrorism attack on the Murrah building and those memories were stirred on September 11. Just as our fellow Americans came to help our state after the April 19th attack, hundreds of Oklahoma firefighters, emergency responders, volunteers and military personnel went to provide comfort and support for our friends in New York and Washington. Out of both tragedies, we saw a compassionate spirit and a resiliency in our communities and nation rise up in response.

Septemberfest is Saturday, Sept 10, at the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion

09/09/2011 07:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and First Gentleman Wade Christensen will host the 15th annual Septemberfest at the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, September 10.

The event, sponsored by Friends of the Mansion, will be held on the grounds of the Mansion and the surrounding area as well as at the Oklahoma History Center.

Septemberfest was started by Governor Keating and First Lady Cathy Keating in 1996 to allow the public to explore the art and historic artifacts of Governor's

Mansion. The event also gives the public a chance to meet the governor and first gentleman.

The event is free and open to the public. Parking for the event is available at the State Capitol and at the Oklahoma City-County Health Department just east of the Mansion.

Visitors can enter through the west gate on Phillips Avenue. Northeast 23rd Street will be closed during the event to ensure safe

Governor Fallin Appoints Patrice Douglas to Oklahoma Corporation Commission

09/08/2011 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Patrice Douglas of Edmond to replace Commissioner Jeff Cloud on the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Cloud announced his resignation from the commission earlier this month.

The Corporation Commission has judicial, legislative and regulatory authority over a number of sectors of the Oklahoma economy, including the transportation, energy and telecommunications industries as well as public utilities.

“The Oklahoma Corporation Commission impacts our economy on many levels through its oversight and regulation of a variety of industries,” Fallin said. “As a small business owner, banker, accomplished attorney and proven leader at the state and local level, Patrice will be an excellent addition as Oklahoma’s newest commissioner. She has proven herself to be a committed public servant and a student of the policy issues facing Oklahoma and its

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to the DHS Commission

09/07/2011 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointments of Wes Lane and Brad Yarbrough to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Commission.

“Having grown up with a mother who worked as a social worker, I have respect for the hard work DHS employees do every day. As a society, it’s incumbent upon us to protect our most vulnerable citizens,” Fallin said. “The neglect, abuse or loss of any child is unacceptable and it’s important we have a fresh perspective to evaluate how such tragedies can be prevented.

Fallin continued, “The new appointees to the DHS Commission have a wealth of knowledge and are community leaders dedicated to assisting our children and our families. I know they are committed to addressing the problems within the child protection system that got us where we are today.”

Lane of Oklahoma City is president of the Burbridge Foundation, a foundation dedicated to

Governor Fallin Appoints Carol Robison to Oklahoma Health Care Authority Board

09/07/2011 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Carol Robison of Oologah to the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) Board. OHCA oversees the purchase of health care benefits for Medicaid recipients and others who are dependent on the state for necessary medical care. The board oversees the authority and appoints an administrator to run the agency.

“The Oklahoma Health Care Authority Board plays an important role in our health care system by providing oversight of the management of our state Medicaid programs,” Fallin said. “As a former nurse and now as the chief executive of a health care staffing company, Carol Robison brings to the OHCA Board unique insight and experience in the health care industry. I know she will work hard to ensure the OHCA continues to deliver health care services in an efficient and effective manner.”

Robison is the chief executive officer of Robison Medical

Governor Fallin Selects Judge Tom Thornbrugh to Fill Vacancy on Oklahoma Civil Appeals Court

09/02/2011 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Judge Tom Thornbrugh of Tulsa to fill the vacancy on the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals District Three.

Since 1997, Thornbrugh has served as district court judge for the 14th Judicial District and currently serves as presiding judge. He has presided over more than 200 jury trials involving civil and criminal felony matters.

“The Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals plays an important role in ensuring our court system provides fair and just treatment for all,” Fallin said. “Judge Thornbrugh has had a distinguished career in both private practice and on the bench. I know in his new role on the Court of Civil Appeals Judge Thornbrugh will be committed to ensuring our citizens receive fair treatment under the law.”

Before being appointed to the district court, Thornbrugh spent more than 20 years in private law practice in Tulsa. He

Office of Personnel Management Administrator Oscar Jackson Announces Retirement

09/01/2011 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oscar Jackson, who has served since June 1991 as Administrator of the Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, today announced his state government retirement, effective November 1, 2011. Jackson was initially appointed

by Governor David Walters, and was subsequently reappointed by Governors Frank Keating, Brad Henry, and in January of this year by Governor Mary Fallin. Jackson's nearly forty-one years of state service also included assignments with The University of Oklahoma and the Department of Human Services.

In reflecting on his state government career, Jackson stated, "I am deeply indebted to Governors Fallin, Henry, Keating and Walters for providing me the opportunity to serve state government and the people of Oklahoma. It has been an honor and privilege to work together with thousands of dedicated state employees over the years who continue to make a difference

Tulsa World: Fallin aims for increase in college graduates

08/25/2011 09:00 AM CDT

STILLWATER - Gov. Mary Fallin said she is working on a plan to ramp up the state's economy by producing more college graduates. Her goal: 1,700 more college graduates a year.

"We need a much higher number of college-educated graduates in our state," Fallin told a town hall meeting on the Oklahoma State University campus.

The state currently produces about 27,000 college degrees a year.

Fallin said she will reveal details of the state's part in the Complete College America program next month, but she said it will involve a new emphasis on retaining college students through to graduation.

The program also will address transfer issues between state colleges and work with private employers to make sure state colleges and universities are producing graduates with the kinds of skills they need, she said.

State Chancellor of Higher Education Glenn Johnson, state Education Secretary Phyllis Hudecki and others are

Tulsa World: FlightSafety soars

08/24/2011 11:30 AM CDT

BROKEN ARROW - Rick Armstrong, vice president of simulation for FlightSafety International, believes the company has a "value proposition" that is attractive to airlines, the military and corporate aviation departments facing high fuel prices in a stagnant economy.

It's cheaper - and more forgiving - to train in a full-motion flight simulator, Armstrong said, than in an aircraft burning high-price jet fuel.

Armstrong told more than 500 people at the grand opening Tuesday of FlightSafety's \$42 million, 375,000-square-foot flight simulator manufacturing facility in Broken Arrow that he expects a strong return on the company's value proposition.

"We look forward to an exciting future here," he said. "We have 684 employees. We

have gone from 240,000 square feet (in four Broken Arrow facilities) to 375,000 square feet. There is room for growth here. Our goal is to be the market leader and to

Broken Arrow Ledger: Flight Safety International holds grand opening

08/24/2011 11:15 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin thanked Tuesday Flight Safety International for its "investment and confidence" in Oklahoma's aerospace industry.

Fallin, along with Broken Arrow Mayor Mike Lester, U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, U.S. Rep. John Sullivan, addressed more than 400 people during its grand opening ceremony at its new facility, 700 N. Ninth St.

Flight Safety International produces aircraft simulators and also trains about 75,000 commercial, military and civilian pilots each year in its 43 centers worldwide. It moved to Broken Arrow in 1987 and employs about 670 people. City and state leaders fought to keep Flight Safety International in Broken Arrow after it outgrew its facilities and considered moving operations out of state. The city offered the company \$6 million in incentives and a 99-year lease to keep it in Broken Arrow.

Fallin said Flight Safety is key to the aerospace industry, which she called one of Oklahoma's most

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments to the Task Force on Comprehensive Tax Reform

08/23/2011 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced her appointments to the Task Force on Comprehensive Tax Reform. The task force makes recommendations on how to simplify the Oklahoma tax code for individuals and businesses. The governor's appointments to the task force are for one-year terms ending in August 2012 as provided for in the enacting legislation.

Rick Dowell of Norman is president of Dowell Properties. He earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Oklahoma and a master's degree and doctorate degree from the University of Chicago. Dowell is replacing John Carey and serves as a small businesses representative on the task force.

Don Millican of Broken Arrow is the chief financial officer at Kaiser–Francis Oil Company. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of North Texas. Millican is replacing Jon Foreman and will serve as an at-large

Governor Fallin and Cabinet to Hold Town Hall Meeting on OSU Campus

08/22/2011 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and members of her Cabinet will hold a town hall meeting on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater on Wednesday, August 24.

Governor Fallin and administration officials will make comments focusing on education and workforce development, and will take questions from the audience. The meeting is free and open to the public; however, space is limited and seats will be available on a “first-come, first-served” basis.

The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Wes Watkins Center Exhibition Hall.

Governor Mary Fallin to Modify Ban on Outdoor Burning in Northeast Oklahoma

08/22/2011 09:30 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Due to recent rainfall in northeastern Oklahoma, Governor Mary Fallin will lift the burn ban in 16 northeast Oklahoma counties. Effective Tuesday, August 23 at 1:00 p.m. the ban will be lifted in Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Kay, Mayes, Muskogee, Nowata, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner, and Washington counties. Most Oklahoma county commissioners meet Monday, August 22 and will have a chance to assess local conditions and consider their own countywide burn bans at that time.

“The recent rainfall has not been enough to end the drought, but it did result in some moderation of the fire danger,” said Governor Fallin. “Lifting the ban in this manner will allow the 16 counties to consider the conditions and fire occurrence at a local level and take measures as they see appropriate.”

A Governor’s Burn Ban remains in effect for 61 counties where a very high fire danger exists due to

Governor Fallin Announces State Shelter Program

08/16/2011 02:15 PM CDT

Oklahoma Officials to Travel to Louisiana for Sheltering Exercise

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced a statewide sheltering exercise that will take emergency managers and other officials from Oklahoma to Louisiana to run a shelter should a hurricane or other event require mass evacuations.

Today through Thursday, a planning task force and more than 100 volunteers will help test the Oklahoma Shelter Program, often referred to as “Shelter in a Box,” during the full-scale exercise in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The Oklahoma Shelter Program was first developed following Hurricanes Gustav and Katrina, when evacuees were transported to Oklahoma for weeks and even months. With both hurricanes, only part of the state of Louisiana was affected, yet residents were transported to locations far from their homes.

The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) worked with Louisiana to determine

Governor Fallin Leads Oklahoma Delegation to International Unmanned Aerial Systems Conference

08/16/2011 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin this week is leading a delegation of Oklahomans at the 2011 Unmanned Systems North America conference in Washington, D.C. The conference is hosted by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI).

Governor Fallin will be joined by business leaders, economic development officers from across the state and officials with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. The governor will speak at a reception hosted by the Oklahoma delegation and will attend meetings to seek business connections to foster growth in the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry in Oklahoma.

“Oklahoma is positioned to become a national leader in UAS and by attending this international conference we will be able to solidify and expand our leadership role,” Fallin said. “Additionally, promoting Oklahoma’s UAS industry at the conference will help us to attract new jobs

Gov. Mary Fallin Supports Kickoff of “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” Campaign

08/15/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Law enforcement officers across Oklahoma are joining forces for the “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” mobilization from Aug. 19 through Sept. 5, and Gov. Mary Fallin is supporting the campaign against impaired driving.

“We are happy to endorse this important effort,” Fallin said. “Last year in Oklahoma, 245 people died in alcohol-related crashes and more than 6,500 people were injured. These are deaths and injuries that could have been avoided if people had not made the irresponsible choice to drink and drive.”

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have established a threshold making it illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 grams per deciliter or higher. The annual nationwide enforcement effort focuses on impaired driving prevention with a goal of reducing roadway fatalities.

“One of the major threats to motorists on our streets and highways is

Governor Fallin Asks Legislators to Replenish State Emergency Fund to Aid Local Communities

08/15/2011 01:15 PM CDT

Says Better Conditions Make Changes in Statewide Burn Ban Likely

OKLAHOMA CITY – Speaking at a press conference addressing the state’s response to the ongoing drought and heat wave, Governor Mary Fallin today said that one of her priorities in the next legislative session would be to replenish the State Emergency Fund. The fund reimburses counties, municipalities, rural electric cooperatives, rural water districts and other entities for infrastructure damage sustained under a presidential disaster declaration.

While the emergency fund was created to lessen the fiscal impact of tornadoes, hurricanes, wild fires and other natural disasters, the state is several years behind in its payments. The current balance stands at \$944.00, with outstanding obligations totaling more than \$36 million.

Governor Fallin Statement on Appeals Court Ruling on Federal Health Care Law

08/12/2011 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released a statement supporting the ruling of a federal appeals court in Atlanta that the “individual mandate” contained within the federal health care law was unconstitutional. The federal panel said in the majority opinion, “This economic mandate represents a wholly novel and potentially unbounded assertion of congressional authority.”

Fallin released the following statement:

“I am pleased that yet another federal court has agreed that the ‘individual mandate’ contained within the president’s health care law is unconstitutional,” Fallin said. “Oklahomans have made it clear the federal government under no circumstance should be allowed to force citizens to purchase health insurance. As this case moves through the federal court system, I look forward to continued validation that the ‘individual mandate’ is

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

08/12/2011 08:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Oklahoma State Council for Interstate Adult Offender Supervision, Oklahoma Health Information Exchange Trust, Construction Industries Board, Commission for Rehabilitation Services, Polygraph Examiners Board, Board on Judicial Compensation and the Oklahoma Department of Libraries Board.

Oklahoma State Council for Interstate Adult Offender Supervision

Richard Dugger of Hammon is a lawyer, rancher and is currently the chairman of the Pardon and Patrol Board. He earned his law degree from Oklahoma City University. Dugger will serve a three year term and is replacing Clinton Johnson. Senate confirmation is required for his appointment.

Oklahoma Health Information Exchange Trust

Joe Nicholson of Tulsa is the vice president and national medical director at Cancer Treatment

Governor Fallin Announces Thunderbird Chapel Project

08/09/2011 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced a project today to construct a chapel at Camp Gruber, with the groundbreaking taking place next month. The project, which has received strong support from Oklahoma citizens, businesses and state leaders, will establish a chapel for the camp, which currently does not have a spiritual center. The chapel will feature a sanctuary and facilities to accommodate services for approximately 200 soldiers, as well as offices for clergy and counseling and areas to conduct seminars, Bible studies and other gatherings. Construction of the project is expected to be completed in approximately six months, with a target goal of completion for Spring 2012, when Oklahoma soldiers return from Afghanistan.

“Oklahoma has a strong history of patriotism and faith,” Governor Fallin said. “This special project allows the state, the people of Oklahoma and faith-based institutions to work cooperatively for a higher

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to NGA Executive Committee and Economic Development Committee

08/09/2011 12:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced that she had been reappointed to the Executive Committee of the National Governor’s Association as well as being reappointed to the NGA Economic Development and Commerce Committee.

“I’m extremely pleased to be able to continue in a leadership role at the National Governor’s Association,” Fallin said. “Serving on the executive committee ensures that Oklahomans will continue to have a voice as we work to develop state-based solutions to the many challenges facing the nation.”

The nine-member Executive Committee sets the NGA’s priorities and determines its activities. Members include:

- NGA Chair Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman
- NGA Vice Chair Delaware Gov. Jack Markell
- Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper
- Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Sales Tax Task Force

08/04/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Task Force on the Collection, Distribution and Enforcement of Municipal Sales Tax.

The task force was created this year by the Legislature. The task force will examine the process by which the Oklahoma Tax Commission assesses, collects and distributes local sales and use taxes to municipalities. Additionally, the task force will consider applicable laws and rules and examine the efficiency of the commission.

The nominations do not require Senate confirmation. The task force will sunset in February 2012.

“It’s important to ensure transparency and accountability in the collection and distribution of sales taxes to our cities and towns. Additionally, I always welcome input into how our government can operate more efficiently and effectively,” Fallin said. “The task force members bring with them experience and knowledge and will serve the state

Governor Fallin Expands Burn Ban to all 77 Counties

08/03/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today expanded the ban on outdoor burning to all of Oklahoma’s 77 counties. The Executive Proclamation expands the 45-county burn ban that was put in place on July 14, as the extreme to excessive drought conditions continue to worsen.

“We have just experienced the hottest July on record,” Fallin said. “The predictions of unrelenting extreme heat with no relief in sight make the statewide burn ban necessary.”

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, report increased fire activity across the state. Firefighter fatigue is a growing concern.

Gas and charcoal grilling is allowed provided that it is over a nonflammable surface and at least five feet from flammable vegetation. Unlawful activities under the ban include campfires, bonfires, fireworks and setting fire to trash, grass, woods or other materials outdoors. For a

Telling the Oklahoma Story

08/01/2011 02:30 PM CDT

It is often said by Oklahomans that our state is the country’s “best kept secret.” With our great people, our low cost of living, beautiful landscape and abundance of natural resources, Oklahoma is a wonderful place to call home. Our economy is strong as well, and in recent months, I’ve worked with our legislature to pass legislation that will make Oklahoma even more prosperous, building a business climate that’s ripe for job growth and investment.

As the numbers show, Oklahoma and its economy are continuing to grow at a steady pace, even while the national economy continues to struggle. While the national unemployment rate hovers near 10 percent, Oklahoma’s has fallen to just 5.3 percent, a 28-month low. And while federal legislators struggle to restore anything

resembling fiscal sanity to the nation's capitol, Oklahoma not only has a balanced budget, but is filling its reserve fund. Last month alone saw \$219 million added to

Talking Points Memo: Oklahoma Wants To Reserve Airspace For Drones

07/29/2011 10:00 AM CDT

A new air corridor to be reserved exclusively for unmanned aerial drones could turn Oklahoma into the prime drone development region of the United States.

Oklahoma state officials are currently pushing for the corridor, which would stretch for approximately 80 miles between Fort Sill and the town of Clinton, to be approved by the Federal Aviation Administration.

If approved, the air corridor would be the first civil airspace in the country where unmanned aircraft could be flown without prior FAA permission.

Oklahoma is already one of the nation's primary centers for drone development; the proposed air corridor is expected to spur business development and encourage relocation of existing projects.

Oklahoma State University's Multispectral Laboratory, which develops UAV technologies and maintains close ties to defense contractors, already has an agreement with the military to fly drone aircraft over portions of Fort Sill's

Pryor Daily Times: Farm Bureau applauds governor's drought relief effort

07/28/2011 03:45 PM CDT

The state's largest farm organization supports Gov. Mary Fallin's executive order allowing truck drivers to haul larger loads of hay.

"This will make it possible for livestock producers to get hay to hungry livestock quicker," said Mike Spradling, president of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

The drought has destroyed local hay fields, forcing producers to seek hay supplies from areas less affected by the drought.

Current rules require hay loads not to exceed 11 feet in width. The executive order increases the limit to 12 feet. A standard large round hay bale is six feet wide. The rule effectively doubles the number of bales a truck can carry without an additional permit.

"We applaud the governor for recognizing this need and for showing compassion during a stressful time for livestock producers," Spradling said.

SiteSelection.com: Oklahoma Wide Open for Opportunity

07/28/2011 10:00 AM CDT

The annual BIO International Convention is always a big draw for governors keen on promoting their states as a prime spot for biotech investment. That number surged to 11 for the 2011 convention held in Washington, D.C. BIO officials say the list included Florida's Rick Scott, Pat Quinn of Illinois, Sam Brownback of Kansas, Steve Beshear of Kentucky, Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, Martin O'Malley of Maryland, Beverly Perdue of North Carolina, Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, Dennis DuGaard of South Dakota, Bob McDonnell of Virginia and Scott Walker of Wisconsin.

The Site Selection Life Sciences Report had the opportunity to sit down with Gov. Scott and Gov. Fallin during the convention to discuss how their states are advancing the life sciences sector.

Scott says he came to BIO to help drive home the point that his state is more than "Disney World and orange juice." He notes that there are about 850 biotech firms, and the state is working to

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

07/28/2011 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the State Credit Union Board, State Board of Osteopathic Examiners, Eastern Oklahoma State College Board of Regents and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission.

“Each person appointed brings with them brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to these positions,” Fallin said. “I know they’ll all serve our state well.”

State Credit Union Board

Gina Wilson of Jenks is the chief executive officer of Oklahoma Central Credit Union. She earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Oklahoma State University. Wilson’s appointment requires Senate confirmation. She is replacing Leslie Rector, who resigned.

Board of Osteopathic Examiners

Cathy Taylor of Tulsa is an attorney and partner at the Perrine, McGivern,

The Oklahoman: Fallin to host Septemberfest

07/28/2011 09:00 AM CDT

Preparations are under way for the 15th annual Septemberfest on the grounds of the Governor's Mansion, 820 NE 23. The free family event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 10. It's the first event to be hosted by Gov. Mary Fallin, who was elected last year, and first gentleman Wade Christensen.

Septemberfest will feature a variety of activities, such as arts, children's activities, interactive exhibits, live entertainment and storytelling. To volunteer, call the United

Way Volunteer Center at 523-3581 or send an e-mail to volunteer@unitedwayokc.org.

In addition to activities at the Governor's Mansion, visitors may enjoy free admission to the Oklahoma History Center, across NE 23 from the mansion. Septemberfest is sponsored by Friends of the Mansion, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring and preserving the Governor's Mansion.

Department of Agriculture Issues Disaster Declaration in 74 Oklahoma Counties

07/27/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) today issued a Secretarial disaster declaration in 69 Oklahoma counties and five contiguous counties. The declaration came in response to a June 10 request by Governor Mary Fallin, who asked the USDA to issue a disaster declaration in order to help farmers hit by drought and wildfires.

Seventy-four Oklahoma counties are currently covered under the USDA declaration. Nowata, Craig and Ottawa counties are not.

According to the USDA, a Secretarial disaster designation makes farmers in designated counties eligible to be considered for federal assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). That assistance includes FSA emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. Farmers in designated counties have 8 months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. Farmers interested in requesting additional

Working Towards a Healthier Oklahoma

07/26/2011 11:15 AM CDT

Obesity rates have grown faster in Oklahoma than any other state in the nation over the last 15 years. According to a report on adult obesity just released by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Oklahoma ranks seventh worst in adult obesity, third worst in physical inactivity among adults, and Oklahoma has the lowest level of fruit and vegetable intake among all states.

As governor, one of my goals is to raise awareness about the seriousness of obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity in Oklahoma. The result of poor nutrition, inactivity, and obesity contributes to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis and cancer. These are critical health indicators that have dire consequences for our families and even our economy. Preventable illnesses related to obesity and unhealthy behaviors are causing

Tulsa Firm Joins Jobs Program

07/26/2011 08:45 AM CDT

Tulsa-based Rely Energy LLC is the latest enrollee in the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program, with the company promising to create an estimated 98 jobs over the next decade.

The maximum benefit Rely Energy could receive through the program is \$2.6 million. The company, which was started in early 2010, helps small and midsize industrial and commercial customers find ways to control their power use and cut costs.

President and co-founder Don Frey said Rely has about 50 clients and is growing its presence in Oklahoma and Texas.

"Energy Star certification for buildings and facilities is a very important part of a comprehensive energy plan, and we're working to streamline this process for our clients," Frey said Monday. "We see lots of opportunities to save clients money, implement best energy practices and contribute toward long-term sustainability."

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the administrative entity for

Dow Jones Newswires: Oklahoma Seeks More Work From AMR's New Airbus Fleet

07/25/2011 10:15 AM CDT

Oklahoma has started pitching American Airlines to expand its maintenance base in Tulsa to accommodate a planned new fleet of Airbus aircraft, its governor said.

The European manufacturer's breakthrough order with American Airlines is expected to trigger a contest among states eager to capture the maintenance and repair work for a fleet of hundreds of Airbus A320-family planes.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin said in an interview that she had discussed the issue "briefly" with American Airlines officials earlier this week, just ahead of the carrier's disclosure of a record-breaking order for 460 planes--with the potential for 465 more. More than half of the new jets will be made by Airbus, a unit of European Aeronautic Defence & Space Co. (EADSY, EAD.FR); the rest will be made by Boeing Co. (BA).

American, a unit of AMR Corp. (AMR), focuses heavy maintenance for its existing all-Boeing fleet at the Tulsa facility, which employs

Governor Mary Fallin Expresses Disappointment with Congress After FAA Reauthorization Extension Goes

07/22/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today expressed disappointment with Congress for failing to pass the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization extension. The FAA's current authorization will expire tonight at midnight.

The failure to pass a reauthorization extension could endanger funding for the FAA Airport Improvement program, FAA facilities and equipment as well as the NextGen Air Transportation System. In Oklahoma, over \$54 million in construction projects at Will Rogers Airport, Tulsa International Airport and general aviation airports across the state could be in jeopardy. Additionally, approximately 130 employees at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City are expected to be furloughed indefinitely without pay.

“It is essential that Congress act quickly to pass an FAA reauthorization bill,” Fallin said

Governor Fallin Eases Truck Rules to Save Livestock

07/22/2011 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today signed an executive order allowing haulers of hay to carry larger loads in their trucks. The order comes in light of the ongoing drought, which has left some farmers without access to hay for livestock.

Current rules restrict haulers of hay to dimensions of 11 feet in width. Governor Fallin’s executive order increases those limits to 12 feet. Because a standard hay bale is six feet in width, this change doubles the amount of hay bales capable of being hauled per truck without a permit.

Additionally, for those vehicles transporting hay to livestock, the executive order temporarily suspends the requirement for an oversized vehicle permit within these limits.

“The historical drought we are now facing is having a serious impact on our entire state, and farmers are among the hardest hit,” Fallin said. “Many farmers are experiencing shortages of hay, leaving their

Fallin pitches Okla. to Chicago-based businesses

07/22/2011 09:30 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin is in Chicago pitching Oklahoma's business climate and workforce in an attempt to lure Illinois-based companies to the Sooner State.

Fallin planned to host a reception Thursday night with several “business prospects” and national location scouts to tout recent changes in Oklahoma law that she described as pro-business.

Fallin said she already met with several Illinois-based businesses that have a presence in Oklahoma, including insurance giant Blue Cross/Blue Shield, transportation company Navistar, and Acciona, which manufactures wind turbines.

Fallin says the purpose of the trip is to both thank the companies for the investments they've already made in Oklahoma and to encourage them to consider the state for future expansion.

She says she's touting changes to Oklahoma's workers' compensation and civil justice laws.

BY: THE

Fallin: State needs game changer

07/19/2011 08:45 AM CDT

TULSA – Oklahoma must come up with exotic industries to become the go-to place for business, Gov. Mary Fallin said.

Fallin spoke to a sold-out audience of 760 people from the Tulsa regional business community during the Tulsa Metro Chamber's annual State of the State address Monday at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Tulsa.

"All states have about the same things they offer business to come to their state," she said. "They all have tax incentives or use higher education or cash-back offers."

In order to stand out, the state needs to create a game changer – something that is distinctive to Oklahoma and no other state, Fallin said.

One exotic business niche that the state should target is the unmanned aerial vehicle sector, she said.

"One such area today is the unmanned aerial systems program," Fallin said. "Aerospace remains a key industry for our state, with more

Ponca City News: Gov. Fallin Attends UC Celebration

07/15/2011 10:30 AM CDT

About 300 people heard Gov. Mary Fallin declare the University Center and its new quarters to be a "model for Oklahoma and other states" at the Tuesday grand opening of the educational center.

Glen Johnson, former House Speaker and present Chancellor of Higher Education, spoke before Gov. Fallin.

During opening remarks, Fallin said, "Johnson is the perfect person as the Chancellor of Higher Education to lead our great state during very interesting and challenging times. It is also a time of great growth and opportunity for our citizens and higher education for Oklahoma.

"I appreciate your support for a unique opportunity like this where a community comes together with the private sector and where individuals and legislators do something great. It provides a wonderful future for children in Oklahoma."

Chancellor Johnson spoke about the importance of education and congratulated the

Governor Fallin Asks Oklahomans to Pray for Rain this Sunday

07/14/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – In light of the sustained drought, Governor Mary Fallin today asked all Oklahomans to set aside time this Sunday, July 17, to pray for rain.

Dry conditions have helped contribute to over 140 wildfires this year, resulting in the loss of dozens of homes. Earlier today, Fallin signed an executive order issuing a burn ban in 45 counties.

Low-levels of rain fall, which match rainfall deficit records dating back to the Dust Bowl, have also lead to significant hardships in the agricultural sector.

“I encourage Oklahomans of all faiths to join me this Sunday in offering their prayers for rain,” Fallin said. “For the safety of our firefighters and our communities and the well-being of our crops and livestock, this state needs the current drought to come to an end. The power of prayer is a wonderful thing, and I would ask every Oklahoman to look to a greater power this weekend and ask for rain.”

Governor Fallin Issues Ban on Outdoor Burning

07/14/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – As drought conditions continue to worsen across Oklahoma, Governor Mary Fallin has issued an Executive Proclamation banning outdoor burning for much of the state. Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, recommended the ban based upon an analysis of fire activity, wildland fuel conditions and the predicted continued drought as criteria for recommending the ban.

The Governor’s Burn Ban covers 45 counties in western and south-central Oklahoma (see map). County Commissioner Burn Bans remain in effect in some counties not covered by the Governor’s proclamation. Extreme fire conditions are increasing with the extraordinary drought. With no significant rainfall predicted, expansion of the number of counties with burning restrictions may be necessary in the future.

“The number of wildfires we have had over the last few months is extremely tough on our state

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to the Governor’s Science and Technology Council

07/14/2011 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of 18 people to the Governor’s Science and Technology Council, a council that has been reinstated by the governor, and will be headed by Secretary of Science and Technology, Dr. Stephen McKeever. The council has been reinstated by executive order for the purpose of identifying opportunities for the growth of science and technology industries in the state of Oklahoma.

All of the appointees are filling new positions and are serving at the pleasure of the governor. Each appointment will last through 2015. Appointees do not draw a yearly salary.

“Cutting edge technologies in industries like energy, aerospace, bioscience and agriculture are an important ingredient to economic growth and job creation, which is exactly why I have decided to reinstate the Governor’s Science and Technology Council. Each of the men and women I have chosen to serve on the council are

Governor Fallin Appoints Roger Stuart as Oklahoma County District Judge

07/13/2011 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today appointed Edmond resident Roger H. Stuart as a district judge in Oklahoma County. Stuart is replacing Justice Noma D. Gurich, who resigned after being appointed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Stuart will serve out the remainder of Gurich’s term, which ends in January of 2015. District judge is an elected office, with the next election being held in November of 2014.

Most recently, Stuart has served as a special judge in the Juvenile Division of the Oklahoma City District Court while working as an adjunct professor at OCU Law School. Previously, he served as the assistant general counsel to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, an assistant United States attorney in the Western District of Oklahoma and an assistant district attorney in Oklahoma County. In the private sector, Stuart worked as an assistant general counsel to the Kerr McGee Corporation.

“Judge Stuart is a dedicated

AP: \$219 million going into Oklahoma's reserve fund

07/12/2011 09:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Oklahoma's finance director said Monday the state will make a \$219 million deposit into the depleted constitutional Rainy Day reserve fund whose current balance totals just over two bucks, thanks to strong revenue collections in June and the recently completed 2011 fiscal year.

Office of State Finance Director Preston Doerflinger said collections by the state's general revenue fund last month were almost 16 percent more than in June 2010 and that revenue for the fiscal year that ended June 30 was 10.5 percent more than the previous year.

"We're getting economic traction in all areas, including some where it appears stagnation has set in for the national economy," Doerflinger said. He said recent declines in Oklahoma's unemployment rate coincide with strong income tax collections, both individual and corporate.

Oklahoma's jobless rate fell to a 28-month low of 5.3 percent in May compared to a national

Governor Fallin Statement on the Passing of Representative Rusty Farley

07/05/2011 11:15 AM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the passing of Oklahoma State Representative Rusty Farley, who died on Monday:

"Representative Farley was a dedicated public servant who will be sorely missed at the capitol. My thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family during this difficult time."

Oklahoma Now: Good transportation network vital to state's economy and job creation

07/04/2011 07:00 AM CDT

I recently participated in the centennial celebration of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. It was a wonderful tribute, and a great time for all of us to remember how important transportation has been, and still is, to this state.

As Oklahoma has grown and flourished over the years, so too has our transportation infrastructure. Imagine the gravel and dirt roads of 100 years ago and note where we are today with a modern, comprehensive statewide transportation network of highways, waterways and railways. Having that modern infrastructure encourages trade and commerce, improves our quality of life, and creates jobs.

The history of Oklahoma transportation is an impressive one. In the agency's early days, the first highway commissioner, Sidney Suggs of Ardmore, proposed six highways, which were eventually built and are still in use today. However, at that time, the highway department didn't have enough money to pay for blue prints let alone

Governor Mary Fallin helps sell Oklahoma at international BIO convention

06/30/2011 08:15 AM CDT

WASHINGTON — Governor Mary Fallin lent her presence as the state's chief executive officer in a big way to the OKBio Association's efforts to promote Oklahoma at the 2011 BIO International Convention under way here through Thursday.

Gov. Mary Fallin helps sell Oklahoma at international BIO convention Fallin was a featured guest Tuesday night at an OKBio reception for invited guests at a Washington restaurant, then joined the group Wednesday morning at the state's exhibition booth.

She brought an enthusiastic message about the positive impact that life sciences has had on the state's economy. Biosciences has a \$6.7 billion impact on the Oklahoma

economy, and supports almost 51,000 jobs and 500 companies in the state, she told about 150 people assembled at Tuesday night's reception.

“That's why we are all here today, to support the industry, to represent it, to sell Oklahoma, to

Governor Fallin Appoints Sandy Bracken to State Banking Board

06/29/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Sandy Bracken of Choctaw to the State Banking Board.

There are seven total members of the board. Six must serve as officers of a bank or trust company; one serves as a lay member. Bracken is the first woman banker to ever serve on the board.

Bracken is the executive vice president and CFO at First Liberty Bank in Oklahoma City and also serves on the board of directors. She is a member of the Oklahoma Bankers Association and the Independent Community Bankers Association.

“Sandy is a true professional who will serve the board well,” said Fallin. “Her long and accomplished banking career will give her the experience and knowledge she needs to be an effective leader.”

Bracken has previously worked at First National Bank in Midwest City, the First State Bank of Canute as the executive vice president and president, Midwest National Bank as

Governor Fallin Leads Oklahoma Delegation to International Biosciences Conference

06/28/2011 12:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin is leading nearly 70 delegates from the state's biosciences industry this week at the BIO 2011 International Convention in Washington, D.C., an international biosciences industry event.

Governor Fallin will be joined by scientists, business leaders, educators and economic development officers from across the state. The governor will speak at a reception hosted by the Oklahoma delegation and will attend meetings to seek business connections to foster growth in the biosciences industry in Oklahoma.

“The Oklahoma biosciences industry has grown rapidly in recent years but there is room for more expansion and research in our state,” Fallin said. “Promoting Oklahoma's biosciences industry at this international conference will help us attract new jobs and more investment to Oklahoma.”

According to the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, the region's

Governor Fallin Makes Appointments

06/27/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin made appointments to the following boards and committees.

State Bond Advisor's Office

Jim Joseph of Edmond is currently the assistant director of capital finance and debt management for Oklahoma State University. He also serves as the chairman of the debt committee for the Municipal Treasures Association and he is an associate for the Government Finance Officers. He is serving a four year term, replacing Tim Martin.

Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force

Jeane Burruss of Oklahoma City is the project manager for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. She is also a coordinator for the State Workforce Youth Council and the project manager for Oklahoma Work Ready Communities. She is serving a term until 2012.

Jay Keel of Ada is an administrator of Youth and Family Services for The Chickasaw Nation. He has served on the board of directors at the Ada Family Crisis Center , Oklahoma

Governor Fallin Announces Appointment to State Board of Education

06/21/2011 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Maj. Gen. Lee Baxter (retired) to the State Board of Education and the State Board of Career and Technology Education.

“Education is key to Oklahoma’s long term economic prosperity,” said Fallin. “With better education, we will have more opportunities to build our workforce and compete in a global economy. Maj. Gen. Baxter knows the importance of education to the future of Oklahoma, and he will do a great job serving these two boards.”

Baxter, of Lawton, is the president and owner of Signal Mountain Associates, Inc. a general and defense consulting firm. In addition, he is the owner of Medicine Park Management, managing partner at Mount Scott Management, and partner at Cobblestone Canyon, all real estate development companies. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Webster University in St. Louis, MO.

“Getting our kids the best

FEMA Grants Public Assistance for 12 Counties Impacted by May Storms

06/21/2011 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - The Federal Emergency Management Agency today granted Governor Mary Fallin’s request for public assistance for 12 counties hard hit by the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding that occurred May 22-25.

The designation delivers federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

The approved counties are Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Delaware, Grady, Jefferson, Kingfisher, LeFlore, Logan, Major, McClain and Osage.

In these counties alone, the storms resulted in an estimated \$15 million in infrastructure damage, and debris removal and response costs. Other counties can be added to the declaration as additional damages are identified.

Individual assistance is already granted for seven counties for damages to homes and businesses related to the storms.

Governor Fallin Accepts \$20,000 Donation for Oklahoma Disaster Relief Effort

06/16/2011 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today accepted a \$20,000 check to aid in the recent tornado recovery effort from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan. The check was presented to Governor Fallin by Director General Joseph Chen and Political Director Edward Chen of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston.

“The donation from Taiwan shows the generous spirit of our friends from overseas,” Fallin said. “It is great to see another country stepping up in our time of need to lend a helping hand.”

Joseph Chen said the country of Taiwan was happy to present the check to Oklahoma.

“This is part of a humanitarian effort by the people and government of Taiwan to show Oklahomans that we are thinking about them and they are in our thoughts and prayers,” Chen said.

The recent tornadoes destroyed 588 homes and damaged more than 1,000. The storms caused an estimated \$10 million in

Governor Fallin Welcomes New Jobs, Expansion of OKC-based UE Manufacturing

06/14/2011 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined officials with Oklahoma City-based UE Manufacturing to announce the creation of 150 new jobs through the opening of a new manufacturing division.

UE Manufacturing, a division of United Holdings, is a global supplier and manufacturer of oilfield service equipment. The company’s new expansion will focus on remanufacturing previously used equipment.

“As governor, my number one priority is to create the best business environment possible to help bring more jobs and investment to Oklahoma,” Governor Fallin said. “It’s always exciting when the results of our work to foster a better business environment can be seen in the expansion of an existing Oklahoma company. I want to congratulate UE Manufacturing on their new facility and thank the company for their continued investment in Oklahoma.”

The UE Manufacturing expansion was recently approved for the

Governor Fallin Joins Other Governors in Releasing Medicaid Reform Principles

06/13/2011 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined 28 other GOP governors in announcing seven guiding principles for reforming Medicaid.

The principles will serve as a framework as governors continue working with Congress as it considers how to reform Medicaid.

“Given the flexibility to craft their own solutions, states can meet the health care challenges of their citizens better than a one-size-fits-all plan handed down from Washington,” Fallin said. “These principles will serve as a guide as we work with the federal government to improve the delivery of Medicaid.”

The seven principles are:

1. States and territories are best able to make decisions about the design of their healthcare systems based on the respective needs, culture and values of each state.
2. States and territories should also have the opportunity to innovate by using flexible, accountable financing mechanisms that are

Civil Rights Leader Clara Luper to Lay in Repose

06/13/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Civil rights activist Clara Luper will lay in repose on the first floor of the Oklahoma State Capitol on Thursday June 16, 2011 from noon till 4 p.m. The capitol is a public building and Oklahomans and well-wishers are invited to visit and pay their respects.

Governor Fallin released the following statement:

“Clara Luper was an Oklahoma hero and I am pleased we are able to honor her here at the capitol building. Her leadership and commitment to equality and justice will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers are with her family as we remember her life and her many accomplishments.”

Governor Fallin Comments on the Passing of Clara Luper

06/09/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement regarding the passing of Clara Luper.

“Clara Luper was an Oklahoma hero, a tremendous civil rights activist and a devoted mother. Her leadership and commitment to equality and justice will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers are with her family as we remember her life and her many accomplishments.”

KJRH: Webco buys Hissom land, creates jobs in Sand Springs

06/08/2011 09:00 AM CDT

SAND SPRINGS, Okla. - Land that's been abandoned for years in Sand Springs is undergoing a transformation and new jobs will come with it.

The old Hissom Memorial Center off of Highway 51 will soon be home to Webco Industries, a tubing manufacturer and supplier.

Since the Hissom Memorial Center closed years ago, dozens of buildings have sat empty, slowly falling apart.

"It was kind of a blight. I drive by this everyday going home," said Mary Eubanks, Sand Springs Chamber of Commerce president. "And you'd think, 'oh why can we not do something with that?' It's a shame the buildings are falling down."

But now, crews are busy demolishing buildings and getting ready for new construction.

"So it's really great to see that something nice is going to be here. When people drive by, instead of going, 'oh my gosh, they're going to go, oh look at that, how neat is that,'"

Journal Record: Boeing named to PrimeWIN program

06/08/2011 09:00 AM CDT

TULSA – With 34 aerospace engineering subcontractors working on E-4B National Airborne Command Post aircraft in Oklahoma City, the Boeing Co. is the first participant accepted into the state's PrimeWIN program.

Gov. Mary Fallin made the announcement Tuesday during the 10th Oklahoma Aerospace Summit and Expo at the Tulsa Convention Center.

PrimeWIN is an incentive program designed to match Oklahoma subcontractors with federal prime contractors, said Dave Lopez, Oklahoma secretary of commerce and tourism.

“We wanted to get more federal government project work into the state so Oklahoma companies can bring more jobs and investment into the state,” Fallin said.

The program incentivizes prime contractors – no matter where they are located – to subcontract work in Oklahoma, Lopez said.

“The prime contractor receives the incentive and the Oklahoma businesses get the work and are able to

Journal Record: Summit - Unmanned aerial vehicle sector shows much promise for growth

06/08/2011 09:00 AM CDT

TULSA – Oklahoma stands on the cusp of a dynamic new economic platform: development of unmanned aerial vehicles.

The aerospace sector already provides the state an impressive economic engine, as Gov. Mary Fallin and Secretary of Commerce and Tourism Dave Lopez said Tuesday during the Oklahoma Aerospace Alliance’s 2011 Oklahoma Aerospace Summit and Expo. The sector’s 500 related companies generate \$12 billion of industrial output annually, their 150,000 workers drawing a \$5 billion payroll.

But the startup UAV sector – also known as unmanned aerial systems, or UAS – already promises to make a sizable addition. In just five years this cottage industry, rising from obscurity to global prominence through the U.S. military’s Middle East war applications, has already generated \$323 million in orders through Ponca City’s Oklahoma State University Multispectral Laboratories.

“This particular industry is

Boeing First Recipient of Oklahoma's PrimeWIN Program

06/07/2011 03:15 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin and Oklahoma Department of Commerce Secretary Dave Lopez today welcomed The Boeing Company as the first participant accepted into the state’s PrimeWIN program.

[PrimeWIN](#) is a first-of- its- kind incentive program designed to match qualified Oklahoma subcontractors with federal prime contractors. PrimeWIN is a feature of the nationally acclaimed Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program.

The announcement was made at the 11th annual Oklahoma Aerospace Summit and Expo held in downtown Tulsa.

"Once again, Oklahoma leads the nation in crafting a performance-based incentive that will deliver increased jobs and investment throughout our state," Fallin said. "We’ve made it easier for federal prime contractors to increase their profitability and cost competitiveness while benefiting from quality subcontractors with small

White House approves Governor Fallin’s request for tornado assistance

06/06/2011 06:00 PM CDT

Oklahoma City – The White House today approved Gov. Mary Fallin’s request for federal disaster assistance related to the May 22-25 tornadoes. Ten people were killed and more than 1,000 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in the violent storms.

The announcement means individuals and business owners in Canadian, Delaware, Grady, Kingfisher, Logan and McClain counties who were impacted by the tornadoes may now qualify for disaster aid. More counties may be added to the declaration as additional damage and unmet financial needs are identified.

The assistance may include help with housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and businesses to repair or replace damaged property, disaster unemployment assistance, and grants for serious needs and necessary disaster expenses not met by other programs.

To apply for disaster assistance, individuals and business

Journal Record: Unmanned aerial systems industry takes flight in Oklahoma

06/06/2011 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – One of Oklahoma’s fastest-emerging industries, unmanned aerial systems, continues its trajectory with new government partnerships and a potential new airspace and corridor for testing.

Meanwhile, the human support on the ground is solidifying, with an advisory council to be appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin, and a new state chapter of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International.

Dr. Stephen McKeever, executive director of the University Multispectral Laboratories, will head the council, which will include 10 to 15 people from the public and private sectors. He said Oklahoma’s assets for unmanned aerial vehicles continue to grow in parallel to a resurgence of aerospace interest among the next generation.

One of the newest developments is an agreement in which Oklahoma entities are researching and developing unmanned aerial vehicles that would test aircraft electronic landing systems for the Federal

Governor Fallin meets with Oklahoma Guard troops

06/02/2011 10:00 AM CDT

Oklahoma Army National Guard troops training at Camp Shelby, Miss., for a mission to Afghanistan were surprised Wednesday when Gov. Mary Fallin showed up to meet with them and wish them well.

Fallin spent nearly seven hours at Camp Shelby, located near Hattiesburg, where she ate lunch with the troops, talked to them individually, and also inspected some of the equipment they will be taking to Afghanistan.

About 3,200 soldiers with the Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade have been training for months for the mission, and they will begin leaving for east-central Afghanistan throughout the month of June.

They are expected to remain in Afghanistan for nine months, and they will perform a full array of duties, including combat patrols, working closely with the Afghan national army.

Fallin said the troops have been well-prepared for the mission and noted "they're ready to go."

"I talked with them, about where they

Governor Fallin visits Oklahoma troops preparing to deploy

06/01/2011 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Gov. Mary Fallin flew to Camp Shelby, Miss., today to visit Oklahoma National Guard troops as they prepare to deploy to Afghanistan.

Fallin arrived at the military post this morning with Maj. Gen. Myles Deering, the adjutant general for Oklahoma's Army and Air National Guard. She planned to meet with some of the more than 3,000 soldiers with the 45th Infantry Brigade as they prepare for the Oklahoma National Guard's largest deployment since the Korean War.

"I'm extremely humbled by the opportunity to visit our brave military men and women at Camp Shelby before they deploy to Afghanistan," Fallin said in a statement. "We owe the 45th Infantry and all our military personnel a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid."

The troops have been training for three months at Camp Shelby and at Fort Polk, La. They will deploy this month to northeast Afghanistan, where they will conduct a

Governor Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Individuals, Businesses in 7 Counties

05/29/2011 08:45 AM CDT

Oklahoma City – Gov. Mary Fallin today asked the White House to approve a major disaster declaration for seven counties impacted by tornadoes that last week left 10 dead and more than 1,000 homes and businesses damaged or destroyed.

The Governor's request for individual assistance includes Caddo, Canadian, Delaware, Grady, Kingfisher, Logan and McClain counties.

Gov. Fallin noted that other counties may be added to the request as additional damage assessments are completed.

According to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, the May 22-25 storms damaged at least 1,093 homes and businesses, including 439 that were destroyed.

If the request for individual assistance is approved, Oklahomans who suffered uninsured storm-related damage in the seven counties would be eligible for assistance for housing repairs or temporary housing, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans for individuals and

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments

05/27/2011 04:00 PM CDT

University Hospitals Authority, State Board of Health and State Board of Pharmacy Appointments Made

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the University Hospitals Authority, the State Board of Health and the state Board of Pharmacy. Mike Samis was reappointed to the University Hospitals Authority and Dr. Terry Gerard was appointed to the State Board of Health. Greg Adams and Stephen Dudley were appointed to the Board of Pharmacy.

“Improving the overall health of Oklahomans is an important priority and key to our long-term success as a state,” Fallin said. “These nominees bring with them valuable experience to their respective health-related boards and will serve our state well.”

Samis, Gerard and Adams have been confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate. Dudley’s appointment does not require Senate confirmation.

Mike Samis, University Hospitals

White House Approves Public Assistance for 10 Counties Impacted by April Flooding

05/27/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the White House has approved public assistance for 10 Oklahoma counties hard hit by severe storms and flooding that occurred in April.

The counties included in the declaration are: Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Haskell, LeFlore, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Pittsburg and Sequoyah. In these counties alone, the storms resulted in an estimated \$8.6 million in infrastructure damage and response costs.

Other counties can be added to the request as additional damages are identified.

The designation delivers federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms that began April 21.

Governor Fallin Signs Special Needs Scholarship Legislation

05/27/2011 10:00 AM CDT

Changes Will End Continued Defiance by Rogue Districts

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin has signed legislation modifying the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program Act to ensure children with special needs receive scholarships in a prompt manner.

House Bill 1744 by State Rep. Jason Nelson (R-Oklahoma City) and State Sen. Patrick Anderson (R-Enid) changes the law so school districts will no longer administer the program. Instead, the Department of Education will administer it.

“Last year, several school districts failed to provide scholarships to eligible special needs students, flagrantly violating the law,” said Nelson. “Thanks to the modifications in this bill, the State Department of Education will administer the program rather than local school districts. This will provide consistency and certainty for students and parents who choose to participate in the

Governor Fallin Signs Bills into Law to Aid Military Personnel and Families

05/26/2011 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she signed into law measures to aid Oklahoma military personnel and families. House Bill 1603, House Bill 1343 and Senate Bill 115 all received unanimous support in the Oklahoma Legislature.

“As the legislative session comes to a close and Memorial Day approaches, this is a fitting end to a constructive and historic legislative year,” said Fallin. “I’m proud of our lawmakers for working in a bipartisan manner to get these bills to my desk and ensure that we are honoring the brave Oklahomans in the United States military.”

HB 1343 grants college scholarships to the children of military personnel killed in the line of duty after January 1, 2000. Scholarships will be administered through the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP).

HB 1603 prohibits the use of military deployment as a cause for changes in child custody

Governor Fallin Signs Erin Swezey Act into Law

05/26/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gov. Mary Fallin has signed The Erin Swezey Act into law. Thursday, the governor approved Senate Bill 529 which is named for the 20-

year-old Oklahoma State University student from Edmond who was killed in 2009 by a drunk driver with numerous DUI arrests and convictions.

“Public Safety is a top priority for Oklahoma, and I believe the Erin Swezey Act will help us save lives,” Fallin said. “My own daughter is only a little bit older than Erin would have been. My heart goes out to the Swezeys and all Oklahomans who’ve been victims of drunk drivers. I’m proud to support legislation that will help us prevent such tragedies.”

Sen. Clark Jolley, R-Edmond, is principal author of SB 529. He said the bill was requested by Erin’s parents, Keith and Dixie Swezey.

“I am extremely grateful to Governor Fallin for her support of this measure, and to my House

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Tornadoes and Severe Storms

05/25/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 68 Oklahoma counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight line winds and flooding that began Tuesday.

The counties included in the declaration are: Adair, Alfalfa, Atoka, Blaine, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cherokee, Choctaw, Cleveland, Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Craig, Creek, Custer, Delaware, Dewey, Garfield, Garvin, Grady, Grant, Haskell, Hughes, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnston, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Latimer, LeFlore, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Major, Marshall, Mayes, McClain, McCurtain, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Seminole, Sequoyah, Stephens, Tillman, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington, Washita, Woods and Woodward.

These Oklahoma counties were east of a dry-line and in an area which experienced tornadoes, straight line winds, damaging hail and

Governor Fallin Statement on Oklahoma Tornadoes

05/24/2011 07:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today regarding the storms in Oklahoma:

“It is obvious the State of Oklahoma has experienced a large tornado outbreak today. I am in constant contact with our State Emergency Operations Center and I know local authorities are doing everything they can to respond to the storm and keep our citizens safe.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those already affected by these storms.

“Unfortunately, this event will likely continue for some time. I am asking all

Oklahomans to stay aware of the weather and to take proper precautions to keep themselves out of harm's way."

Governor Fallin Signs Legislative Priorities into Law

05/24/2011 11:15 AM CDT

Bills include workers' compensation reform, job-creation tools, government modernization initiatives, education reform

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin signed several key pieces of her legislative agenda into law today at a public bill signing session with legislators and state leaders. The governor signed 8 bills, all of which completed goals laid out by Fallin in her state of the state address.

The legislation signed today included bills reforming Oklahoma's costly and inefficient workers' compensation system, restructuring the state's Internet Technology (IT) systems, generating cost savings through government modernization, and creating new tools for private sector job creation. One bill also changed the composition of the Board of Education.

"Today's bill signing really puts an exclamation point on what has been an incredibly productive legislative session,"

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Tornadoes, Flooding

05/24/2011 10:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 14 Oklahoma counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight line winds and flooding that began Sunday.

The counties included in the declaration are: Adair, Blaine, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Kiowa, Mayes, Muskogee, Nowata, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Rogers and Wagoner.

The declaration can be amended to add additional counties if conditions warrant.

Since Sunday, these Oklahoma counties have experienced tornadoes, straight line winds, damaging hail and flooding. Initial assessments show more than 80 structures were damaged and power lines were downed by the storms.

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions. The declaration also marks a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

Governor Mary Fallin Announces New Wind Energy Facility Opening in Woodward

05/23/2011 12:00 PM CDT

Siemens Energy Wind Service Distribution Center will be Company's Largest in U.S.

Governor Mary Fallin today joined executives from Siemens Energy to announce the company is opening a U.S. wind service distribution center in Woodward, Oklahoma. The announcement came during a trip lead by Fallin and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to the American Wind Energy Association annual tradeshow and convention in Anaheim, California. More than 20,000 wind industry leaders, government officials, and business executives are expected to participate in the event.

Construction of two facilities will begin this month and is expected to be completed by the end of 2011. With a total of 64,000 square feet, the combined main component, tooling and spare parts facilities will be Siemens' largest wind power service distribution center to date in the U.S. The geographic location of the primary distribution complex will provide customers with reduced

The Oklahoman: Fallin enjoys legislative successes

05/22/2011 09:45 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin, helped by a strong supporting cast, fared well in her first stint dealing with the Legislature as the state's chief executive.

As lieutenant governor, she had watched from the sidelines for 12 years. She saw Republican Gov. Frank Keating struggle with a Democratic Legislature, then saw Democratic Gov. Brad Henry work with a growing number of Republicans to reboot the state economy, only to see it wither under the national recession.

After being elected to Congress from central Oklahoma's 5th Congressional District in 2006, Fallin won election last year on the theme of getting legislation passed to develop a better business climate for the state, attracting new jobs and helping existing businesses.

Many of the proposals she made in February, during her first State of the State address, were embraced and passed before lawmakers ended their work Friday.

"I'm actually very proud of all the things that we

The Oklahoman: Bill will improve Oklahoma workers' comp system

05/22/2011 09:45 AM CDT

THE last significant changes to Oklahoma's workers' compensation system, in 2005, followed noisy legislative debate that included the lieutenant governor at one point taking control of the Senate in an effort to get a bill passed. A bill wound up being produced at the eleventh hour and lawmakers had to extend the session before approving it.

There were no such histrionics this session. Instead, after much behind-the-scenes work, state Rep. Dan Sullivan and state Sen. Anthony Sykes presented Senate Bill

878 last week and the 220-page bill quickly gained easy passage in the House and Senate.

“The reason you don't see that outcry is we did make an attempt to bring representatives of all the groups together,” said Sullivan, R-Tulsa. “It lengthens the process, but that's not all bad. If there's one thing I've learned in my time here, it's be careful of making decisions in a vacuum.”

That's

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma Legislature pushed pro-business measures

05/22/2011 09:45 AM CDT

Promises to pass legislation intended to improve Oklahoma's business climate that had been sought for decades by the state's business community will define this year's session, the first time ever a Republican governor and a GOP-controlled Legislature were in power at the same time.

House Speaker Kris Steele, R-Shawnee, said passage of pro-business measures should help improve the state's economy.

“We succeeded in creating an environment where businesses can succeed and families can prosper,” Steele said. Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman, R-Sapulpa, said: “Certainly we had a pro-business agenda, but I think all the reforms that we've enacted affect everybody. Workers' compensation reform — that's good for big business, that's good for small business, that's good for the injured worker.”

Even before the session ended Friday, the Property Casualty Insurers Association of

Governor Fallin Praises Historic 2011 Legislative Session

05/20/2011 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The last pieces of Governor Mary Fallin's legislative agenda passed and were sent to her desk today, as the historic 2011 session came to a close. While the legislature will officially declare the session over next Friday (5/27), legislative leaders have indicated that no more bills are to be considered this year.

In what was one of the most productive legislative sessions in Oklahoma history, Governor Fallin signed into law hundreds of bills, and received on her desk landmark legislation focusing on:

- Creating more and better jobs by promoting a business friendly environment
- Building a smaller, smarter government that better serves our citizens
- Fighting the federal health care law while pursuing Oklahoma solutions for better health
- Improving Oklahoma schools and delivering quality education
- Protecting children and the lives of the unborn

Governor Fallin Requests Public Assistance for 10 Counties Impacted by April Flooding

05/20/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested the White House grant public assistance for 10 eastern Oklahoma counties hard hit by severe storms and flooding that occurred last month.

If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storms.

The counties included in the request are Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Haskell, LeFlore, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Pittsburg and Sequoyah. In these counties alone, the storms resulted in an estimated \$8.6 million in infrastructure damage and response costs. Other counties can be added to the request as additional damages are identified.

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission

05/20/2011 12:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission.

The governor appointed Julie Jacobs Daniels, Xavier Niera, Dr. Rick Henry, Charles Perry, Ronda Roush and T.L. Walker. The nominees were confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate on Wednesday.

“Our abundant natural resources, exciting recreational activities and rich cultural heritage all contribute to our vibrant tourism industry,” Fallin said. “Travel and tourism play a vital role in our economy and contribute to job creation and tax revenues all across our state. The nominees for the Tourism Commission are experienced and talented individuals and will serve our state well by promoting travel and tourism.”

Julie Jacobs Daniels of Bartlesville is a longtime community volunteer. She previously served as mayor of Bartlesville and as a member of the city council. She

Governor Mary Fallin Announces Appointments

05/20/2011 09:30 AM CDT

ABLE Commission, Accountancy Board, Organ Donor Council Appointments Made

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement (ABLE) Commission, the Oklahoma Accountancy Board and the Organ Donor Education and Awareness Program Advisory Council. The nominees have been confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate.

“These nominees have proven themselves as leaders in their respective fields,” Fallin said. “I know they will serve the state and citizens of Oklahoma well.”

ABLE Commission

Bryan Close of Tulsa has been reappointed to the ABLE Commission. He has served on the commission since 1994.

Close serves as president of CloseBend, a pipe fitting company. He also has experience managing restaurants and is a member of the Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

He is a graduate of Oklahoma State

Governor Fallin Signs SB 763 into Law

05/18/2011 02:15 PM CDT

Measure Moves Human Rights Commission to Attorney General's Office

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a measure to consolidate the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission into the Attorney General’s Office. Senate Bill 763, by Sen. Clark Jolley and Rep. Dan Sullivan, will save tax dollars through the consolidation of shared administrative services while continuing the mission of protecting citizens from discrimination and human rights violations.

SB 763 creates within the Attorney General’s Office an Office of Civil Rights Enforcement that will assume the functions, duties and responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission.

“Protecting human rights is an important function of government and I support the goal of eliminating discrimination,” Fallin said. “Merging the responsibilities and duties of the Human Rights Commission into the Attorney General’s Office will

Governor Fallin Makes Appointments to Education Boards

05/18/2011 11:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the board of regents for Rose State College, Northern Oklahoma College and Redlands Community College. The Oklahoma State Senate confirmed the nominees on Tuesday.

“These nominees are leaders in their respective fields and bring with them a commitment to ensuring our colleges and universities continue to provide a quality education to our students,” Fallin said.

Tracey Wills, Redlands Community College

Tracey Wills of Edmond is appointed to the Board of Regents for Redlands Community College. She is founder of The Wills Group, a company that specializes in health-care related business ventures.

Wills is a member of the Oklahoma chapter of the International Women's Forum and the Women's Presidents Organization. She also serves on the advisory board of First Liberty Bank in Oklahoma City.

In

Governor Fallin, CLO Announce Record-Breaking Distributions for Education

05/16/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of the Commissioners of the Land Office Harry Birdwell today announced a record-setting year for the money provided by the CLO to K-12 schools, colleges and universities.

The agency is expecting to distribute a total of \$124 million to schools over the course of fiscal year 2011, the largest annual distribution to schools in state history and over \$10 million more than was distributed in FY 2010. As of now, the CLO has distributed \$112 million to education, including \$84.9 million to common education, and is expected to distribute another \$12 million total by the end of the fiscal year in June.

In addition, CLO officials report that all indications point to another record disbursement year in fiscal year 2012 if state oil and gas drilling activities continue at a strong pace. CLO distributions continue to climb, with education distributions reaching \$82.6 million in FY 2009, \$114.3 million

Governor Fallin Announces Appointment to Oklahoma Conservation Commission

05/16/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced the appointment of Karl Jett as Area 1 commissioner of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

“As a fourth-generation farmer and rancher, Karl Jett will bring leadership and experience to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission,” Fallin said. “He is committed to preserving and protecting Oklahoma’s natural resources for our citizens’ enjoyment and the enjoyment of future generations.”

Jett has operated KC Farms in Laverne since 1972. He currently serves as the district chairman of the Beaver County Conservation District and on the board of directors at First Security Bank in Beaver.

He has previously served on the boards of: Beaver County Fair Board Association; Beaver County Junior Livestock Association; Laverne Farmers Cooperative; and Farmers Grain of Follett, TX.

Jett graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in

Edmond Sun: Gov. signs variety of public safety bills

05/16/2011 10:00 AM CDT

EDMOND — Gov. Mary Fallin has signed a variety of public safety bills, including one related to rights of child abuse victims, a measure about who can use deadly force and legislation which outlaws abortion of a fetus capable of feeling pain.

House Bill 1888, the “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act,” by state Rep. Pam Peterson, R-Tulsa, was approved by the governor on April 20. It was passed by the full House 94-2 and by the full Senate 25-20.

Rep. Randy Grau, R-Edmond, and Rep. Marian Cooksey, R-Edmond, were among the House co-authors sponsoring the bill. Sen. Clark Jolley, R-Edmond, was the principal Senate author.

On the House floor, Peterson said the bill makes it illegal to perform an abortion on an unborn child capable of feeling pain, more specifically, an unborn child who is 20 weeks old or older.

When she explained the bill, Peterson sent a 4-D ultrasound image of a 20-week unborn child to House members

The Oklahoman: Gov. Fallin signs eminent domain law to protect landowners from wind farm threat

05/16/2011 10:00 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin has signed into law an eminent domain measure that protects rural landowners from the threat of companies looking for locations to build wind turbines.

The bill's author, Sen. Ron Justice, of Chickasha, said wind power provides a tremendous boost to the state's economy, but he said it is important to protect landowners' rights.

The law was heralded by a northwest Oklahoma property owners group.

“The Southern Great Plains Property Rights Coalition supports any legislation which will help landowners protect their property now and for future generations,” the group said Friday. “We feel this is a step in the right direction since the use of eminent domain for profit is becoming a hot topic.”

The law prohibits use of the power of eminent domain for the siting or erection of wind turbines on private land. It says landowners have the right to decide whether they want turbines on their

The Oklahoman: IT consolidation needs to happen in Oklahoma

05/16/2011 10:00 AM CDT

A controversy earlier this year involving emails at the state Department of Education provided a glimpse into just how badly Oklahoma's information technology system needs to be reworked. It's clear, however, that moving the system into the 21st century promises to be a long slog indeed.

Shortly after the new state schools superintendent took office in January, it was discovered that emails by former Superintendent Sandy Garrett had been permanently deleted before she left office. An employee said Garrett told her to delete the account, something Garrett disputed. Not up for dispute was that the agency uses an email program the state's chief information officer, Alex Pettit, called "terribly archaic."

The program also was different from most other state agencies, which is no great surprise. In her state of the state speech, Gov. Mary Fallin said some state institutions were "outdated eight-track bureaucracies in an iPod

Governor Fallin Signs SHOPP Legislation

05/13/2011 04:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law legislation creating the Supplemental Hospital Offset Payment Program, or SHOPP. The program, proposed under HB 1381, allows for a provider assessment to support Oklahoma hospitals. The bill protects patients by specifically prohibiting hospitals from passing on the cost of the assessment to them.

"SHOPP is an important piece of legislation that provides necessary support and funding for Oklahoma's hospitals," Fallin said. "Getting this legislation signed into law will be a big boost for our medical community and will help to improve access to quality medical care for all of our citizens. HB 1381 is an especially important bill for rural Oklahoma, where some hospitals might be forced to close without this additional support."

Craig Jones, president of the Oklahoma Hospital Association, said HB 1381 would help to improve access to hospital services.

Federal assistance approved for February snow storm

05/13/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today the White House has approved her request for additional federal aid related to the first February snow storm.

"This is good news for the state of Oklahoma and those counties hit hardest by the February storm," Fallin said.

The announcement delivers a major disaster declaration for the severe winter storm that occurred Jan. 31 through Feb. 5. The declaration means public assistance will be available for expenses related to eligible infrastructure damage including roads, bridges and public facilities, as well as snow removal and response costs. Counties

now covered are: Craig, Creek, Jefferson, Logan, Mayes, Nowata, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Rogers, Stephens, Tulsa, Wagoner and Washington.

Initial surveys estimate eligible state and local costs for the storm throughout these counties exceed \$8.7 million.

Governor Fallin declared

Governor Fallin Appoints Two to Education Boards

05/12/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the State Board of Career and Technology Education and the Board of Regents for Tulsa Community College (TCC).

The governor appointed Karl L. Meyers to the Career and Technology board and Masoud Moazami to the TCC regents. Each appointment requires Senate confirmation.

“These individuals are leaders in their fields and are committed to ensuring our vocational system and colleges provide quality education and training to our students,” Fallin said.

Karl L. Meyers of Warner and is owner of Tissue Converting Services, a manufacturing consulting firm, and operates a cattle ranch. He previously served as operating vice president of Georgia-Pacific Corporation.

Meyers has served on the board of directors for Oklahoma Career Tech and on industry advisory councils for Connors State College, Northeastern State University and the School

Governor Fallin Signs Legislation Suspending Art in Public Places Act

05/11/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 1665, a measure that suspends the Art in Public Places Act. In the last three fiscal years, the act set aside a total of \$3.4 million to be spent on public art alone as part of various public building projects, according to the Oklahoma Historical Society.

“While we all appreciate the aesthetic and cultural value art can bring to public building projects, it’s not appropriate to set aside millions of dollars for public art when the state is facing a \$500 million budget deficit,” Fallin said. “By suspending the Art in Public Places Act, we will be able to save tax dollars by reducing the overall costs of public building projects for the immediate future.”

HB 1665 suspends the requirements of the Art in Public Places Act for state agencies during fiscal years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Governor Fallin Signs Landmark Corrections Reform Legislation in to Law

05/11/2011 02:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin today signed into law landmark corrections reform legislation. The governor was joined by House Speaker Kris Steele, Department of Corrections Director Justin Jones and other state leaders. House Bill 2131, authored by Steele, is designed to relieve widespread fiscal and social strains caused by Oklahoma’s nation-leading incarceration rates.

“This bill is about being smart on crime as well as tough on crime,” Fallin said. “The reforms we are signing into law will not only save taxpayer dollars, they’ll help to address some of the social problems that continue to drag down the quality of life in our otherwise great state. By pursuing responsible community sentencing options that allow non-violent offenders – many of whom have substance abuse problems – to receive treatment and safely reintegrate into their communities, we can help to break a cycle of poverty, drug abuse and crime that has

Governor Fallin, Legislative Leaders Announce Budget Deal

05/10/2011 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Governor Mary Fallin, House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate Pro Tempore Brian Bingman today announced a budget agreement laying out a fiscally responsible plan to balance the state budget without raising taxes. Addressing a \$500 million shortfall, today’s budget deal relies primarily on targeted budget cuts.

As part of the budget agreement, both the speaker and the pro tem have committed to passing key government modernization bills, including legislation to consolidate several state agencies under the Office of State Finance and legislation to consolidate the state’s Internet Technology services. Both items include projected savings and were included as part of Fallin’s legislative agenda.

Under the proposed FY 2012 budget, cuts to state agencies vary, generally ranging from 1 to 9 percent. Both the governor and legislative leaders made shielding core government functions a priority. For that reason, cuts to the

Governor Fallin Signs Key Pension Reform Legislation into Law

05/10/2011 03:30 PM CDT

Reforms Will Reduce Pension Systems’ Unfunded Liability by Over \$5 billion

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed several key pieces of pension reform legislation into law at a public bill signing with state leaders. The bills aim to provide a boost to the fiscal solvency of the state’s public employee pension systems, which are currently troubled with \$16 billion in unfunded liability.

“Pension reform is about creating a sustainable future for our state budget and our state retirement systems,” Fallin said. “We can’t keep allowing these systems to go deeper and deeper into debt without serious consequences. By beginning the reform

process today, we are helping to ensure that we don't one day face a crisis scenario where the state is simply unable to deliver on the benefits we've promised our retired workers."

One bill, HB 2132, authored by House Speaker Kris

Tulsa World: Gov. Fallin signs education reform bills in to law

05/05/2011 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY - Gov. Mary Fallin signed two education reform measures into law Wednesday.

Senate Bill 346 ends "social promotion" for students after the third grade.

It requires third-graders to be proficient in reading before moving on to the fourth grade.

House Bill 1456 sets a grading system for schools based on an A to F scale.

"It is a very exciting day for Oklahoma, a very exciting day for Oklahoma school children and an exciting day for improving education in the state of Oklahoma," Fallin said at a bill-signing ceremony in the governor's large conference room.

HB 1456 will increase accountability in education and empower parents, Fallin said.

"With that system in place, parents will now have the ability to quickly and easily be able to evaluate the quality of education that our children are receiving," she said.

"I believe it will also encourage teachers

The Oklahoman: Oklahoma governor signs bill intended to end social promotion in public schools

05/05/2011 09:00 AM CDT

Public schools no longer will be able to promote third-grade students who cannot read at appropriate levels under a bill signed into law Wednesday.

"It has been said that in the first through the third grade a child learns to read, but the fourth grade on, a child reads to learn," said Gov. Mary Fallin, who signed Senate Bill 346 and another education measure into law during a bill-signing ceremony.

"If our children are not able to read at grade- appropriate levels, they can't learn the math, the science, the social studies as they continue to go through the education system.

"We're doing a great disservice to our children, a great disservice to our parents, a great disservice to our workforce when our children are passed from grade to grade without the ability to read at grade- appropriate levels."

SB 346 takes effect in late August.

Fallin also signed House Bill 1456, which will

Governor Fallin Signs Key Education Reform Measures into Law

05/04/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Fallin signed two important education reform measures into law today at a public bill-signing ceremony with education leaders and elected officials.

Fallin signed Senate Bill 346, ending social promotion for students after the third grade. SB 346 requires students in the third grade to demonstrate proficiency in reading before moving on to fourth grade. The bill was a key component of Fallin’s education reform agenda and mentioned in her State of the State address.

“Studies have shown that from kindergarten through the third grade, a child ‘learns to read’, but from fourth grade on, they ‘read to learn,’” said Fallin. “This bill makes sure that every fourth grader has developed the reading proficiency they need to absorb new academic material and succeed in class. Sending an illiterate child on to higher grade levels is setting that child up for failure, and I commend the

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Oklahoma Horse Racing Commission

05/02/2011 03:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced appointments to the Oklahoma Horse Racing Commission (OHRC). The governor selected Phillip Kirk, Melvin Bollenbach, Joe Lucas and Ran Leonard. Each will serve a six-year term and Senate confirmation is required for each appointment.

“These individuals have years of experience in equestrianism and the horse-racing industry,” Fallin said. “I know they will use their expertise to hold the commission and the industry to an extremely high standard.”

Philip Kirk of Tulsa is a part-time charter pilot. Before retiring, he served as owner and chairman at Resonant Machines, a highway contracting firm in Tulsa, senior vice president at The Management Compensation Group, a national consulting firm in Los Angeles, and at the Reading & Bates Corporation, an international offshore drilling company in Tulsa. He also is a former race horse owner and

Oklahoma Now - 'Strong Finish: More Reforms Needed in Last Month of Legislative Session'

05/02/2011 01:00 PM CDT

May is the last month of the 2011 legislative session, and I’m happy to say this legislative year is on track to be a productive one. Several key reforms already having been signed into law and more are on the way.

We have delivered, for instance, on landmark lawsuit reform that will help to create more jobs in Oklahoma by establishing a better business climate and placing a cap of \$350,000 on non-economic damages.

Where education is concerned, the legislature has worked with me to pass bills making it easier to let go ineffective teachers, ending a lengthy and costly legal appeals process known as “trial de novo” that had previously made it nearly impossible to fire even the most ineffective instructors.

We have also passed important pro-life measures, prohibiting abortions after 20 weeks (when an unborn child begins to feel pain) and ensuring that those citizens who purchase private health insurance are not unknowingly or

Governor Fallin Statement on bin Laden Death

05/02/2011 10:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin released the following statement today on the successful elimination of Osama bin Laden by U.S. armed forces:

“Our military men and women and our intelligence officers have once again made the world a safer place. This is a great victory in the War on Terror and a defeat for Al Qaeda and all those who use terror as a weapon. It is also, I hope, a cause for relief and for closure among the many men and women who lost loved ones in the September 11th attacks. I would encourage all Oklahomans and Americans to keep the victims of 9/11 and their families in our thoughts and prayers as we celebrate this important victory for the United States and all freedom-loving people.”

Tulsa World: Fallin accomplishing legislative goals

05/01/2011 09:45 AM CDT

After a little more than 100 days in office, Gov. Mary Fallin's legislative agenda is doing very nicely, thank you.

"At the beginning of the legislative session, I outlined an agenda that will create a better business climate, bring more and better jobs to Oklahoma and reform government to make it smaller and more efficient," Fallin said in a statement to the Tulsa World. "I'm happy to say that our lawmakers have responded by sending a number of priority bills to my desk and continuing to work on other important agenda items.

"By all accounts, it looks like 2011 will be a productive and important legislative session."

True enough.

Fallin's State of the State address set out 13 identifiable legislative initiatives. While she hasn't cleared the tables on all 13, and she has had to accept some compromises, a little more than midway through the legislative year she finds herself in a position most

Governor Fallin Vetoes House Bill 1227

04/29/2011 01:45 PM CDT

Bill to Create Ardmore Branch Campus Lacks Sustainable, Long Term Funding Plan

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today vetoed House Bill 1227, which would convert the Ardmore Higher Education Center into a branch campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University. While Fallin said she supports expanding opportunities for higher education in Ardmore, she said that the plan to create a new branch campus needed more thorough vetting and a more comprehensive plan for sustainable funding.

“Supporting access to higher education is an important goal and something that I am committed to doing,” said Fallin. “Unfortunately, House Bill 1227, while well-intentioned, is flawed. The bill’s intent is to create and maintain a new college campus with funds from local government and private contributions; however, it is doubtful that such a campus can be sustained in the long run without significant state support. In other words, the

Governor Fallin Signs Union Reform Bill

04/29/2011 01:45 PM CDT

Bill Repeals the Oklahoma Municipal Employee Collective Bargaining Act

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 1593, authored by Representative Steve Martin, Senator Cliff Aldridge and Senator Clark Jolley. HB 1593 repeals the Oklahoma Municipal Employee Collective Bargaining Act, a law requiring collective bargaining for non-uniformed employees in cities with at least 35,000 residents.

“House Bill 1593 will help to control costs for Oklahoma’s cities and save taxpayer dollars,” said Fallin. “I’m happy to sign it into law.”

Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Norman and Muskogee – all of which had collective bargaining agreements prior to the 2004 passage of the Oklahoma Municipal Employee Collective Bargaining Act – will not be affected by the new law. HB 1593 goes into effect on November 1, 2011.

Governor Fallin Requests Public Assistance for Atoka County

04/29/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant public assistance for Atoka County, hard hit by the April 14th Tushka tornado. If approved, the designation would deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties and rural electric cooperatives with infrastructure repairs, debris removal and costs associated with responding to the storm. The aid would also help Tushka School District with their recovery efforts.

“It is my hope to secure federal public assistance in order to make the recovery process as seamless as possible,” said Fallin. “In the meantime, we continue to hold the victims of this tragedy in our thoughts and prayers.”

A preliminary damage survey identified more than \$10 million in uninsured infrastructure losses in Atoka County due to the tornado. Other counties can be added to the request as additional damages are

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Tornadoes, Flooding

04/27/2011 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for 11 Oklahoma counties due to tornadoes, severe storms, straight line winds and flooding.

The counties included in the declaration are: Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Haskell, LeFlore, McCurtain, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Ottawa, Pittsburg and Sequoyah.

Since Thursday, Oklahoma has experienced at least three tornadoes and widespread flooding. East central areas of the state have received 10 to 13 inches of rain. Some homes and businesses sustained damage as well as many roads and bridges.

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions. The declaration also marks a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

Further damage assessments are expected to begin next week.

Commissioners of the Land Office appoint Harry Birdwell as Secretary

04/26/2011 04:45 PM CDT

Governor Mary Fallin and the Commissioners of the Land Office today appointed Harry W. Birdwell as the new Secretary of the Land Office.

“Harry Birdwell brings strengths to the agency including a strong background in education, rural development, investments and economic development” Fallin said.

Birdwell’s background includes work the Oklahoma State University, The Rural Electric Co-op and the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

Talking about the opportunity, Birdwell said, “It is a great time to link the Commissioners of the Land Office to the perspectives of the newly elected state leadership to continue the trend of accountability and to think outside the box to maximize the yield from the state’s land resources and to leverage and stimulate economic development”.

The Commissioners of the Land Office have, to date, provided just under \$113 million dollars to schools and colleges across the state.

Governor Fallin Signs Law Expanding Self-Defense Rights

04/25/2011 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 1439, authored by Representative Steven Vaughan and Senator David Myers. HB 1439 expands the right to use deadly force when in fear of imminent peril of death or great bodily harm. Current law allows individuals to use deadly force only in their homes; HB 1439 expands that right to include their place of business. The bill takes on November 1.

“Oklahomans have the right to feel safe and defend themselves in their homes and now, with the passage of this law, in their workplaces as well. This measure represents a victory for law-abiding citizens and gun owners and a defeat for the criminals who would threaten them,” Fallin said.

Governor Fallin Signs Two Pro-Life Bills into Law

04/20/2011 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed two pieces of pro-life legislation into law at a ceremony attended by pro-life legislators and advocates.

House Bill 1888, authored by Representative Pam Peterson and Senator Clark Jolley, creates the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which bans abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Scientific studies have shown that at 20 weeks an unborn child can feel pain. The bill exempts situations in which the life of the mother is at risk or when the mother faces serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment.

Senate Bill 547, authored by Senator Anthony Sykes and Representative Dennis Johnson, ensures standard health insurance policies sold in Oklahoma or sold through a state health insurance exchange do not include elective abortion coverage. The bill prevents Oklahomans from unwillingly subsidizing abortion coverage simply by purchasing health insurance. Under SB 547, those who want

Governor Fallin Statement on Oklahoma City Bombing Anniversary

04/19/2011 02:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the 16th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing:

“Sixteen years ago, 168 victims tragically lost their lives in an unimaginable and shocking act of terrorism. Today, we remember the fallen, give comfort to the families left behind and to the survivors. We also again express our appreciation for the rescue workers and first responders who spent countless hours at the scene.

“In the days and weeks after the bombing, the world saw on display our resilient nature as we comforted one another and began the difficult healing process. That community spirit, known as the ‘Oklahoma Standard,’ continues to showcase the generosity, resiliency and loving nature of our citizens even during the most difficult of times.”

Governor Mary Fallin Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Atoka County in Aftermath of Tornado

04/18/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today requested a federal disaster declaration for Atoka County in the wake of the deadly tornado that swept through the town of Tushka on April 14. The designation would provide federal assistance to individuals and businesses in the tornado-ravaged area.

Two confirmed deaths and 43 injuries are attributed to the Tushka tornado. According to preliminary damage assessments conducted this weekend, the storm damaged 237 homes and businesses in Atoka County. Of those, 149 were destroyed, 47 sustained major damage and 33 had minor damage.

“The deadly storm led to the tragic loss of two lives and our prayers continue to be with the families who lost loved ones,” Fallin said. “The storm also severely damaged or destroyed the homes of many residents and this disaster declaration is the first step in helping residents get back on their feet.”

If the request is approved,

Governor Fallin Signs Funeral Protest Restrictions into Law

04/18/2011 03:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law Senate Bill 406, a measure adding further restrictions to funeral protests.

The bill, by Sen. Josh Brecheen of Coalgate and Rep. Dustin Roberts of Durant, would prohibit protests within two hours before or after a funeral. SB 406 also bans such protests from within 1,000 feet of a funeral. Previous law allowed protests to occur within 500 feet.

“Protesting a funeral for political purposes is an abhorrent and disgusting practice,” Fallin said. “While such distasteful protests have been ruled constitutionally protected and cannot be legally prohibited, this legislation will help protect grieving families from people who are looking to exploit their suffering.”

Governor Fallin Reappoints Ed Keller to OSU-Tulsa Board of Trustees

04/18/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has reappointed Ed Keller to the OSU–Tulsa Board of Trustees. Keller resides in Tulsa and is the chairman at Summit Bank.

Keller has served as chief executive officer (CEO) of J.P. Morgan Chase and Bank IV Oklahoma. He has also served as Chairman and CEO of Bank One Oklahoma.

“Our colleges and universities are vital to our long-term success as a state,” Fallin said. “Ed Keller has proven himself an effective leader for the OSU-Tulsa Board of Trustees. I know he will be dedicated to ensuring our students are provided everything they need to succeed while also ensuring OSU-Tulsa continues to produce the skilled graduates we need to advance our state.”

Keller serves on the board of directors at Mutual of Omaha Bank and on the board of governors for the Oklahoma State University Foundation. He is also the director of the University Center Trust

Governor Fallin Signs Measure Requiring Legislative Approval of Rules Changes

04/15/2011 02:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin has signed into law House Bill 1044, a measure requiring legislative approval of rules changes related to fee increases and scope of practice issues. The bill was signed into law Thursday.

HB 1044 by Rep. George Faught of Muskogee and Sen. Anthony Sykes of Moore requires legislative approval of any rule that establishes or increases fees or any rule by an agency, board or commission created by or that receives authority from Title 59, relating to professions and occupations. If the legislature fails to approve the rule by the last day of the session, the rule is deemed “disapproved.”

In her State of the State address, the governor called for more scrutiny of new rules and regulations.

“In my State of the State address, I pointed out the need for a thorough review of new rules and regulations to ensure they achieve their intended goals and do not create more bureaucratic

Agreement Reached on Oklahoma Health Insurance Private Enterprise Network

04/14/2011 01:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today joined other state leaders in announcing that Oklahoma will establish a Health Insurance Private Enterprise Network to prevent the establishment of a federal health care exchange in Oklahoma.

Working together, leaders were able to address concerns expressed by some by adding specific safeguards into the legislation that will prevent the implementation of a federal health care exchange while creating an Oklahoma-based health insurance

network. The Health Insurance Private Enterprise Network, based on a concept by the conservative Heritage Foundation and legislation passed by the Oklahoma Legislature in 2009, will increase access to affordable, private, portable health insurance plans through a free market-based network that offers choice and competition to consumers. The network will be governed by a board consisting of a majority of members from the private sector and chaired by the Insurance

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Energy Reform Measure

04/13/2011 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed in to law House Bill 1909, an energy reform measure dealing with the state’s oil and gas laws.

The bill by Rep. Mike Jackson of Enid and Sen. Cliff Branan of Oklahoma City, also known as the 2011 Shale Reservoir Development Act, modernizes Oklahoma oil and gas statutes to better accommodate technological advances associated with horizontal drilling in shale reservoirs.

“This legislation is an important step in bringing state oil and gas laws up to date with innovations needed to keep Oklahoma’s oil and gas industry competitive. House Bill 1909 will help Oklahoma to more effectively compete against other shale plays around the country, and help ensure that drilling dollars stay home in Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “Through the use of these technologies, our oil and gas producers can reach and produce even more of Oklahoma’s vast oil and natural gas resources in ways

Governor Fallin Signs Education Reform Bill Eliminating ‘Trial de Novo’

04/12/2011 05:30 PM CDT

Bill Allows Under-Performing Teachers to be Dismissed without Costly Legal Appeals Process

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 1380, an education reform measure that makes it easier to dismiss underperforming teachers.

Under the current system, tenured teachers who are dismissed by local school boards can appeal that decision in district court. The appeals process, known as “trial de novo,” assures that dismissing underperforming teachers is both a lengthy and expensive process for schools. HB 1380 eliminates “trial de novo” and reforms the system to allow locally elected school boards to let teachers go without a long and costly appeals process.

Fallin said the bill is the first step in a series of education reform measures she is asking the legislature to send to her desk. Fallin had earlier identified the elimination of “trial de novo” as a priority in her

Governor Fallin Reappoints Joe Hall to OSU/A&M Board of Regents

04/12/2011 03:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she will reappoint Joe Hall to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges (OSU/A&M) Board of Regents. Hall resides in Elk City and is the owner of 4GH Ranch, a land and cattle operation, Joe D. Hall General Contractors, a construction firm, and is the chairman of InterBank. Hall was first appointed in 2003 by Governor Brad Henry.

“Joe has proven himself to be an effective and dedicated regent,” Fallin said. “No one is more passionate about the quality of our universities and colleges than he is. I know he will continue to do a great job.”

Hall is a member of the American Institute of Constructors, the Oklahoma Cattlemen Association and the Texas Cattle Feeders Association. He is the past director of the Elk City Chamber of Commerce and past president and director of the Kiwanis Club.

“I am delighted Governor Fallin has nominated me for

Governor Fallin Signs Law Reforming Role of Board of Education

04/08/2011 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law House Bill 2139, a measure that reforms the duties of the state Board of Education and the superintendant of public instruction.

The bill, authored by House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate Pro Tem Brian Bingman, streamlines the operations of the state Department of Education by placing control of the department with the superintendent rather than the state Board of Education.

The bill also clarifies the superintendent’s authority to give advice and make recommendations to the state Board of Education on all matters pertaining to the policies and administration of the public school system. It also directs the state board to submit a budget, as prepared by the state superintendent, to the governor’s office.

“In Oklahoma, the superintendent of public instruction is elected based upon the ideas and agenda they present to voters. And the superintendent

Governor Fallin Announces Appointment to OSU/A&M Board of Regents

04/08/2011 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she will appoint Ricky Joe Davis to the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges (OSU/A&M). Davis, a resident of Guthrie, will replace Regent Fred Boettcher of Ponca City, who is resigning effective May 1. Davis will be serving out the remainder of Boettcher’s unexpired term. His appointment is

effective May 2, 2011 and expires April 4, 2016. This appointment requires Senate confirmation.

“Continuing to raise the bar for our educational institutions is one of the most important things we can do to ensure the long term prosperity and economic growth of our state,” said Fallin. “Rick received his degree in Agricultural Economics from OSU and then pursued a successful career in agriculture, which is exactly the kind of tradition we are continuing to build on at our colleges and universities. I know he’ll do everything he can to continue to raise the

Governor Fallin Appoints Retired General Toney Stricklin to Oklahoma State Regents for Higher E

04/08/2011 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed retired Major General Toney Stricklin of Lawton to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Stricklin is a retired U.S. Army officer and previously served on the State Board for Career and Technology Education and as chairman of the Information Technology Panel for the Oklahoma Economic Development Generating Excellence (EDGE) initiative. Both were gubernatorial appointments.

“Our colleges and universities are vital to producing the kind of skilled and educated workforce we need in order to compete globally. As governor, I’ll continue to support our higher education institutions while always looking for ways we can improve,” Fallin said. “As a former Army officer and longtime civic volunteer, Toney Stricklin is an experienced leader who will work to ensure our colleges and universities continue to provide a quality education for our

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Transportation Commission

04/07/2011 01:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today her nominees for the eight members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. Senate confirmation is required. They are:

- District 1: John Fidler of Okmulgee, current executive vice president at Citizens Security Bank; replaces Carlisle Mabrey III.
- District 2: J. David Burrage of Atoka, current president and CEO of FirstBank; replaces James H. Dunegan.
- District 3: Danny Blaine Overland of Shawnee, currently a senior vice president of the Pottawatomie Telephone Corporation; re-appointed.
- District 4: Greg M. Love of Oklahoma City, currently the president of the Loves Development Company; replaces Jackie R. Cooper.
- District 5: C. Todd Huckabay of Snyder, currently the president and CEO of Bank of the Wichitas; replaces Loyd Benson.
- District 6: Bobby J. Alexander of Woodward, owner and operator of Power Rig; replaces Bruce

Governor Fallin Signs Landmark Lawsuit Reform Bills Into Law

04/05/2011 04:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed a series of lawsuit reform measures into law, delivering on a key portion of her job-creation agenda.

“At the beginning of the year, I asked our Legislature to work with me to do everything we can to create more jobs and build a better environment for doing business in Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “Lawsuit reform was at the top of the list.”

"For too long, inflated legal fees have been an unnecessary cost-driver in the private sector and a burden on the medical community. As a result, we've seen businesses and doctors choose to locate in other states, depriving our citizens of good jobs, reducing access to medical care and driving up the costs for medical treatment.

“I’m thrilled to be able to sign into law measures which will directly address skyrocketing legal fees, protect our doctors, and help to bring more jobs and businesses into Oklahoma while

Governor Fallin Applauds U.S. House GOP Commitment to Block Grants

04/05/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today applauded the plan put forward by Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives to convert the federal share of Medicaid spending into block grants for states. That plan is part of the “Roadmap to Prosperity” budget proposal unveiled earlier today. Fallin also praised the GOP’s commitment to fiscal discipline and debt reduction. Fallin also released the following statement:

“In addition to offering a serious commitment to fiscal responsibility and debt reduction, House Republicans should be applauded for introducing a plan that shifts policy decisions away from the federal government and closer to the people. Specifically, I’m extremely pleased to see the new GOP budget proposes eliminating the one-size-fits-all approach to Medicaid spending and replaces it with a block grant approach. Block grants will allow states more flexibility in meeting the individual needs of their citizens

Governor Fallin Requests Major Disaster Declaration for February Snow Storm

04/05/2011 01:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today she has asked the White House for a major disaster declaration related to the first February snow storm.

The latest request seeks a major disaster declaration for the severe winter storm for 16 Oklahoma counties impacted January 31 through February 5. The request would deliver public assistance to the following counties: Craig, Creek, Jefferson, Logan,

Mayes, Nowata, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Rogers, Stephens, Tulsa, Wagoner and Washington.

“The severe winter storms caused widespread damage and cost local communities millions of dollars,” Fallin said. “This major disaster declaration will allow local and state governments to seek help with eligible infrastructure repair costs.”

Additional counties may be added to the public assistance disaster request as more damage assessments are completed.

Initial surveys

Bill limiting lawsuits advances to governor

04/05/2011 10:15 AM CDT

A bill that would cap the pain and suffering damages that could be awarded in civil lawsuits is headed to Gov. Mary Fallin.

After more than two hours of debate, the Senate on Monday approved House Bill 2128 by House Speaker Kris Steele, R-Shawnee, and Sen. Anthony Sykes, R-Moore. Amendments to the measure were not heard.

Lawyers, injured people and doctors filled the gallery to watch the debate. Doctors wore white lab coats, while some critics of the measure donned hospital gowns to represent injured victims.

The measure passed by a vote of 30-14.

Fallin campaigned on supporting lawsuit reform.

The measure does not cap what are called economic damages paid to cover lost wages, future earnings and medical bills. Noneconomic damages, or pain and suffering, would be capped at \$350,000 with some exceptions for reckless disregard for the rights of others, gross negligence, fraud, and intentional or malicious

Fallin holds bill signing for aerospace measure

04/05/2011 10:15 AM CDT

New Republican Gov. Mary Fallin signed a bill on Monday designed to lure more aerospace companies to Oklahoma by offering tax credits for salaries paid to qualified engineers.

Flanked by lawmakers and aerospace industry officials, Fallin signed the House bill during her first public bill signing ceremony as governor. The measure, which is projected to cost the state nearly \$6 million in its first year, allows companies to be reimbursed up to 10 percent of the salary paid to qualified engineers for up to five years if the engineer graduated from a university in Oklahoma. The reimbursement is 5 percent if the engineer graduated from a school outside of the state.

The measure also provides a tax credit for 50 percent of the tuition cost of an employee who attends a qualified engineering program at a public institution in Oklahoma.

"The aerospace industry is one of the top industries in our state, and having this aerospace engineers tax credit

Gov. Mary Fallin signs aerospace tax cut measure

04/05/2011 10:15 AM CDT

An aerospace engineering tax incentive that was shelved a year ago will be taking off later this year.

Gov. Mary Fallin on Monday signed House Bill 1008, which will remove the aerospace incentives from a list of nearly 30 tax credits that legislators last year suspended. Lawmakers put it on a two-year moratorium to help balance this year's state budget.

The measure takes effect July 1.

Fallin said the measure is needed to encourage growth in the state's aerospace industry. The credits can be claimed only after companies have hired new engineers; the creation of new jobs is a requirement to claim the credit.

"The aerospace industry is one of our top industries in our state," Fallin said. "Having this aerospace engineering tax credit will go a long ways in not only helping us retain jobs but certainly to be more attractive to new jobs coming to the state of Oklahoma."

The average aerospace

Oklahoma Now - School Spirit: Raising the Bar in Education

04/04/2011 01:45 PM CDT

By Governor Mary Fallin

In my State of the State address this February, I told lawmakers that nothing is more important to the future of our state and our long-term prosperity than improving student achievement. To see that improvement, I've outlined a comprehensive series of reforms to increase accountability and transparency in education, get more money into the classroom where it can do the most good, and raise the bar for students and teachers.

Among the legislative items I am hoping to see signed into law are bills to:

- **Empower the state superintendent so that she has the ability to truly run the Department of Education:** Voters elected Superintendent Janet Barresi to implement the reform agenda she outlined during her campaign. She – not the unelected Board of Education – should have the power to run her own department.

- **End “trial de novo:”** Under our

Governor Fallin Appoints Phil Lakin, Jr. to State Board of Education

03/31/2011 10:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Phil Lakin, Jr. of Tulsa to the Oklahoma State Board of Education.

Since 1999, Lakin has been the chief executive officer of the Tulsa Community Foundation, the largest community foundation in America. Prior to that, Lakin served as regional director of development for Baylor University.

Lakin is also the current president of the Tulsa Educare early childhood education centers and serves on the board of the Tulsa Community College Foundation. Additionally, he is active in numerous civic organizations such as the Folds of Honor Foundation, Tulsa Zoo Management, Inc., the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, Tulsa United Way and the George Kaiser Family Foundation.

“Phil Lakin is an accomplished civic leader who is absolutely dedicated to improving student achievement,” said Fallin. “I know he’ll work well with our other board members and

Oklahoma Senate committees approve Gov. Mary Fallin’s nominees

03/29/2011 03:45 PM CDT

Senate committees approved four of Gov. Mary Fallin’s executive nominees Monday.

Now awaiting full Senate confirmation are: Glenn Coffee, for secretary of state and gubernatorial Cabinet secretary; Phyllis Hudecki, for Cabinet education secretary; Oscar Jackson, for director of the Office of Personnel Management and Cabinet human resources and administration secretary; and Albert Ashwood, for director of the state Emergency Management Department. Jackson and Ashwood already serve in those positions.

JOHN ESTUS, CAPITOL BUREAU

By The Oklahoman

Governor Fallin Praises Senate Education Committee for Advancing Key Reform Measures

03/28/2011 04:15 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded members of the Senate Education Committee today for their approval of two bills related to education reform.

HB 2139 defines the responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The second bill, HB 1380, eliminates a legal procedure known as “trial de novo,” thereby simplifying the process of dismissing ineffective teachers. Fallin named the elimination of “trial de novo” as a priority in her State of the State address.

Both measures now proceed to the Senate.

“I applaud the Senate Education Committee for working to approve both of these important bills and I encourage the Legislature to get them to my desk as soon as possible. Signing these bills into law will help to increase accountability in our classrooms, ensure the state of Oklahoma employs qualified and effective teachers, and ultimately work to improve

Governor Fallin Appoints Clay Bennett to OU Board of Regents

03/25/2011 05:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has appointed Clay Bennett to the Board of Regents for the University of Oklahoma. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

“Our universities play an integral part in producing the kind of talented, skilled workforce we need in order to compete in a global economy. That kind of quality work force, combined with the cutting-edge research done at universities like OU, helps to create new jobs and opportunities in Oklahoma,” Fallin said. “Clay Bennett brings with him to the OU Regents a commitment to maintain and expand OU’s level of academic achievement as well as the experience and insight he has gained as a successful businessman. I am confident he will be an effective leader who is committed to ensuring the university continues to provide a quality education to our students and a positive impact on our economy.”

Bennett is president of Dorchester Capital, a

Governor Fallin Announces Appointments to Turnpike Authority

03/25/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today her nominees for the six members of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. Senate confirmation is required. They are:

- District 1: G. Carl Gibson of Norman, current COO of Inoveon Corp; replaces Douglas F. Riebel
- District 2: Kenneth G. Adams of Bartlesville, chairman of the Adams Investment Company; replaces Mike Leonard
- District 3: Albert C. “Kell” Kelly of Bristow, president and CEO of Spirit Bank; replaces Hal Ellis
- District 4: Kevin Hern of Tulsa, owner of KTAK corporation; replaces Clark Brewster
- District 5: E. Gene Love of Lawton, CEO of Millennium Solutions Group; replaces C. Kendrick Ferguson

- District 6: David A. Burrage of Durant, attorney; re-appointed

“Maintaining and repairing our turnpikes and transportation infrastructure is important to our citizens and important to Oklahoma’s

Governor Fallin Announces Tax Commission Appointment

03/24/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today her nomination of Dawn Cash to serve as one of three commissioners who oversee the Oklahoma Tax Commission. Cash is the current director of the Tax Policy division of the Tax Commission. Her nomination requires Senate confirmation.

Cash has also worked as the senior deputy general counsel at the Tax Commission, as well as serving as an attorney in the private sector.

“Dawn is an experienced public servant who is dedicated to making government work better for the people of Oklahoma,” said Fallin. “The work done by the Tax Commission affects every Oklahoman. Dawn is up to the challenge of insuring the agency is responsive to our citizens and accountable to our taxpayers.”

Cash received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Oklahoma and a juris doctorate from the University of Tulsa. She is a resident of Oklahoma City.

Governor Fallin Issues Statement on Anniversary of Federal Health Care Law Passage

03/23/2011 09:15 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement today regarding the one year anniversary of the passage of the federal health care law. While in Congress, Fallin voted against the bill.

She supports the national effort to repeal and replace the law with legislation as well as the legal effort to have the bill struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. Oklahoma is one of the many states that filed a legal challenge to the federal law.

Fallin’s statement:

“A year ago today, President Obama signed into law one of the most ill-conceived pieces of legislation to have ever come from Washington, D.C.: the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. ‘ObamaCare,’ as it has come to be known, is both an assault on our constitutional liberties and a burden on our already struggling

Oklahoma veterans plan to make honor flights

03/22/2011 10:00 AM CDT

Gilbert “Choc” Charleston and Robert Heatley, who rolled through Europe in tanks during World War II, will be flying together in May to see the National World War II Memorial for the first time.

Charleston and Heatley, both 87, will be making the trip thanks to Oklahoma Honor Flights, a privately funded effort to fly World War II service members and other veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit national monuments and memorials dedicated to their service.

The group organized two flights last year and plans to have two more flights this year.

Efforts are under way to raise money to pay for a third flight. Each flight costs about \$100,000 to send about 100 veterans and 60 volunteer assistants on the one-day, round-trip flight.

Charleston, who drove a U.S. Army tank in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany, said he will be making the trip in May to honor the men in his company. Of 127 members, only 15 remain living.

Gov. Mary Fallin tells officials of Oklahoma cities she will help in job efforts

03/22/2011 10:00 AM CDT

Gov. Mary Fallin pledged to mayors and city officials Monday to help them in their efforts to attract and keep jobs.

“I want you to know that as governor I am available to help you,” Fallin told about 120 attending a legislative forum by the Mayors Council of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Municipal League at the state Capitol. “Know that I am standing by to help you to close the deal or to help you keep that company in your community.”

Piedmont Mayor Mike Fina, who is vice president of the Mayors Council of Oklahoma, said his group especially liked the governor's message.

“We've been trying to get elected officials to take that step for years, to have that level of partnership,” Fina said. “If they'll follow through on it, then it will be very beneficial for the entire state.

“To have your governor or your lieutenant governor take an active role in economic development can

Governor Mary Fallin Signs Bill Providing Additional Funds to Department of Corrections

03/18/2011 02:30 PM CDT

Bill is the first piece of legislation signed into law by Fallin

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today signed into law a bill (SB 970) to allow the Department of Corrections to use \$5.25 million from a prison industries fund. The bill will help to prevent additional furloughs in the department. It is the first piece of legislation she has signed into law during her term as governor. Fallin released the following statement:

“This bill will get the Department of Corrections the funds it needs to safely operate our prisons and prevent additional furloughs. I remain absolutely committed to public safety and I’m glad the department and the Legislature were able to work together with our office to reach this solution.”

Governor Mary Fallin Applauds Boeing Jobs Announcement

03/18/2011 12:45 PM CDT

Company planning second facility to house new jobs and expanded operations in OKC

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today welcomed an announcement from The Boeing Company that it is planning to build a second facility in Oklahoma City to accommodate 550 new jobs and expanded operations.

“I’m very pleased to hear that Boeing is building a second facility to accommodate 550 new jobs and the company’s expanded operations in Oklahoma City,” Fallin said. “As governor, I will continue to pursue pro-growth policies that allow us to attract more jobs and opportunities for Oklahomans so that announcements like this will be more common across our state. This is great news for the aerospace industry, and to our new friends at Boeing, I say ‘welcome to Oklahoma!’”

Governor Mary Fallin Applauds Approval of One-Stop Business Licensing Plan

03/17/2011 03:30 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin applauded the Oklahoma House of Representatives today for approving a bill that would implement part of the agenda she laid out in her State of the State address.

House Bill 1601, by state Rep. Aaron Stiles and state Sen. Clark Jolley, would establish a one-stop shop for business owners to obtain licenses and permits, making the process more efficient and convenient for Oklahoma businesses. The Senate has already passed a similar bill, SB 772.

Fallin released the following statement:

“Creating a user-friendly, one-stop shop for business licensing is an important part of making Oklahoma friendlier to business growth and job creation. It shouldn’t be any easier to open a business in Texas than it is in Oklahoma, and legislation like this goes a long way toward making sure it isn’t.”

Governor’s Business Licensing One-Stop Plan Approved

03/17/2011 01:45 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma House of Representatives has approved Gov. Mary Fallin’s request to provide convenience to Oklahoma business owners.

House Bill 1601, by state Rep. Aaron Stiles (R-Norman) and state Sen. Clark Jolley (R-Edmond), would establish a one-stop shop through which business owners could establish a new business and obtain the licenses and permits they need in one convenient location.

“This plan is designed to cut through the government bureaucracy, which is a strong disincentive to the creation of new businesses and jobs,” Stiles explained. “Business owners should not be forced to navigate through a gauntlet of multiple agencies and government red tape in order to start their business.”

“Governor Fallin’s proposal will enable Oklahoma businessmen to spend less time dealing with government and more time focusing on their business,” added House Government Modernization

Governor’s Plan To Save Millions Approved

03/17/2011 09:45 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma House of Representatives has approved legislation proposed by Gov. Mary Fallin to save millions of taxpayers dollars through the implementation of information technology (IT) process reforms.

Governor Fallin is seeking to realize \$140 million of savings in the state’s fiscal year 2012 budget from the incorporation of this reform, along with \$50 million in savings from a temporary freeze on IT purchases, for a combined savings of \$192 million.

“This measure is an important step in providing the smaller, smarter government that conservative lawmakers promised to deliver to voters,” Fallin said. “Consolidating our IT resources across state agencies will allow the government to operate more efficiently and effectively while saving taxpayers a large amount of money in the next fiscal year. I’m extremely pleased to see the House move forward on this legislation.”

House Bill 1304

Governor Fallin Praises House for Passing Legislation Creating Quick Action Closing Fund

03/16/2011 04:00 PM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today praised the Oklahoma House of Representatives for passing legislation authorizing the creation of a closing fund used to bring more businesses and jobs to the state. She released the following statement:

“I am extremely pleased to see the House pass legislation authorizing a Quick Action Closing Fund. That fund will serve as an important method of bringing new

businesses to Oklahoma and will help to create more and better private sector jobs for our citizens.”

Governor Fallin Asks Legislature to Pass IT Modernization and Consolidation Bill

03/15/2011 12:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY—Governor Mary Fallin today encouraged lawmakers to pass HB 1304, legislation designed to streamline technology systems throughout state government and improve both the efficiency and security of the state’s information technology (IT) systems. Under HB 1304, savings for the state would include the consolidation and streamlining of:

- 76 financial systems
- 22 unique time and attendance systems
- 17 different imaging systems
- 30 data center locations and
- 129 email and blackberry services

The plan, which was included as part of Fallin’s executive budget, would include implementing a freeze on capital spending in IT that would save taxpayers \$50 million in FY 2012. Further consolidating IT resources across state agencies would save an additional \$142 million, for a total of \$192 million in savings.

“The consolidation of IT resources allows

Governor Fallin Asks Lawmakers to Pass Legislation Creating a Quick Action Closing Fund

03/15/2011 12:00 AM CDT

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today asked the Oklahoma Legislature to pass legislation authorizing a Quick Action Closing Fund. The fund would be used as an economic development tool to bring businesses and new jobs to Oklahoma, similar to the Texas Enterprise Fund. To date, the TEF has generated over 56,000 new jobs and \$14.7 billion in capital investment for Texas, according to the office of Texas Governor Rick Perry.

The creation of a closing fund was mentioned as one of Fallin’s priorities in her State of the State address in February. Fallin released the following statement, encouraging lawmakers to pass HB 1953, which would create that fund:

“Authorizing the Quick Action Closing Fund is a key part of our job creation agenda. It will grant my administration an important tool as we work to ‘seal the deal’ with businesses that are serious about bringing a large number of jobs and a substantial investment to the state

Governor Fallin Declares State of Emergency Due to Wildfires

03/11/2011 12:00 AM CST

Declaration is for all 77 counties

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties due to the devastating wildfires. Already more than two dozen fires have been reported throughout the state causing evacuations in some areas.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all Oklahomans who have been impacted by these fires as well as our emergency responders in harms’ way,” Fallin said. “We know homes, as well as other property, have been lost and we will work to do everything we can to help Oklahomans during their time of need.”

Under the Executive Order, state agencies can make emergency purchases and acquisitions needed to expedite the delivery of resources to local jurisdictions. The declaration also marks a first step toward seeking federal assistance should it be necessary.

Governor Fallin Praises Oklahoma Senate for Passing Workers’ Compensation Bill

03/10/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Legislation worked on by Governor Mary Fallin’s Workers’ Compensation Study Group and authored by Senators Anthony Sykes and Patrick Anderson was passed unanimously today (44-0) by the Oklahoma State Senate. Workers’ compensation was listed as an important step to creating more jobs and an environment friendlier to business growth and development in Fallin’s State of the State address. Fallin released the following statement:

“Our current workers’ compensation system is expensive, inefficient and ultimately drives jobs out of the state of Oklahoma. It is a system that has long been in need of an overhaul. I am extremely pleased to see the Senate has taken action and passed a comprehensive reform bill. This plan will create a system that is fair to both workers and employers, lowers costs and helps us in our mission of creating a better environment for business growth and job creation. It is a key step in

Oklahoma Now: Time to Modernize our Government

03/08/2011 12:00 AM CST

Over the course of this prolonged national recession, Oklahomans and Americans everywhere have been called on to make sacrifices. They’ve balanced their budgets by tightening their belts, and they have found creative, sometimes difficult, ways to live within their means.

Government is not immune to the recession, nor should it be exempt from the kind of sacrifices that Oklahoma’s families and businesses have been making for several years.

Going into Fiscal Year 2012, our state government is facing a \$500 million shortfall. Balancing the budget will require difficult decisions and budget cuts.

Originally, those budget cuts were estimated to be as high as 8-10 percent for every agency. While not impossible to absorb, those kind of deep reductions would certainly have a real impact on agencies dealing with public safety, health, and education. I am proud to say that, through the use of innovative cost-saving measures, my executive

Governor's Plan to Save \$3.6 Million Approved

03/08/2011 12:00 AM CST

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma — Governor Mary Fallin's proposal to modernize the state's vendor payment system and save \$3.6 million per year has been approved by the House of Representatives' Government Modernization Committee.

House Bill 1086 proposes to utilize electronic payments methods such as direct deposit to pay the state's thousands of vendor invoices. The bill is sponsored by state Reps. Jason Murphey (R-Guthrie), Josh Cockroft (R-McCloud), and state Sen. Clark Jolley (R-Edmond).

Fallin called on legislators to approve the reform during her State of the State address. Fallin proposed the change after the Office of State Finance indicated that the state could be spending up to \$13.50 per vendor payment for each payment made using traditional paper conveyances such as payment warrants. This compares to electronic payments which cost the state approximately 5 cents per transfer.

Currently, approximately 230,000

Governor, members of Legislature view National Guard training

03/04/2011 12:00 AM CST

CAMP GRUBER — Gov. Mary Fallin on Thursday told National Guardsmen at Camp Gruber she and Oklahoma state legislators with her held them in high esteem.

"We're deeply honored to be here," Fallin said. "We know you're making sacrifices. We owe you our gratitude. We owe you our respect."

Fallin and 23 members of the Oklahoma Legislature visited Camp Gruber to learn about its resources, current preparations for deployment overseas, and to watch combat training exercises.

Fallin and the legislators were also given an audio-visual presentation about Camp Gruber's 33,000-acre facility, its capabilities, and plans for expansion. The presentation also gave an example of economic impact, saying that one of the current training groups has poured \$2,192,000 into the local economy. Muskogee leaders at the event included Mayor John Tyler Hammons, City Manager Greg Buckley, Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of

Gov. Mary Fallin visits Oklahoma troops at Camp Gruber

03/04/2011 12:00 AM CST

BRAGGS — Gov. Mary Fallin said Thursday she couldn't be prouder of the 3,400 Oklahoma National Guard soldiers training for deployment to Afghanistan.

Fallin and a group of state legislators flew in a Black Hawk helicopter to visit some of the soldiers as they trained at Camp Gruber near Braggs.

The 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will deploy to Afghanistan in late May or early June, military officials said.

Fallin and the legislators watched a group of soldiers go through a training exercise and then chatted with others in a mess hall.

“We want to make sure our soldiers have the training to not only perform their mission, but to be safe,” Fallin said. “It's comforting to see the great training for combat that is going on here at Camp Gruber.”

Fallin said the state and nation owe the soldiers and their families the best possible training and equipment before they step on foreign

Gov. Fallin not convinced Obama's offer would allow state solutions for health care reform

03/01/2011 12:00 AM CST

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin is not convinced president's offer would allow state solutions for health care reform. President Obama says states could get waiver on some federal rules by 2014.

BY Chris Casteel, The Oklahoman

WASHINGTON — Gov. Mary Fallin welcomed President Barack Obama's announcement Monday that states should get an earlier chance to design their own health care systems, but she said she was still concerned the law's mandates would hinder state solutions.

“I'd like to just opt out totally, you know, of the health care bill and allow Oklahoma its ability to innovate,” Fallin said here after she and other governors met with Obama at the White House.

The health care law — along with rapidly growing costs for Medicaid, the federal-state health care program — was a major topic of discussion at the National Governors Association gathering in Washington over the past few

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin headed to Washington

02/28/2011 12:00 AM CST

Oklahoma's first female governor is attending her first National Governors Association meeting. The freshman governor has been named to the group's nine-member executive committee.

BY MICHAEL MCNUTT, The Oklahoman

Gov. Mary Fallin will be telling her peers this weekend about her efforts to reduce a \$500 million budget shortfall by agency cuts and consolidations and making the state more efficient by sharing services.

Oklahoma's first female governor is heading to her first National Governors Association since winning the gubernatorial election in November. The meeting begins today in Washington and runs through Monday.

Fallin has been named to the association's nine-member executive committee; she is the only governor elected in November named to the committee. Members are elected annually and supervise the association's operations. It has general authority over all policy issues and primary jurisdiction

Fallin pays first visit to Sill since taking office

02/28/2011 12:00 AM CST

By MITCH MEADOR, Lawton Constitution

Gov. Mary Fallin on Friday paid her first official visit to Fort Sill since taking office.

"Fort Sill and Lawton are a very important part of Oklahoma because we have so many of our war fighters who are being trained here," she said. "(It's) especially important to our mission as a nation, to keep our nation safe and certainly to deploy to various areas of the world where we fight for our freedom as a nation."

The governor said she was here to get a "great" tour, talk about the mission of Fort Sill and continue to build upon the community partnership that is so important to keeping Oklahoma's five military installations safe and secure. Fallin said she actually comes here quite a bit.

"I was a member of the (U.S. House) Armed Services Committee, and so I've been here several times. But over the last five years there has been \$1.2

Oklahoma Will Accept \$54 M Grant to Support Oklahoma-based Health Insurance Exchange

02/25/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin joined other state leaders today in announcing that the state of Oklahoma will accept a \$54 million grant to help design and implement the information technology infrastructure to operate an Oklahoma health insurance exchange. Fallin listed the creation of such an exchange as one of her top priorities in her State of the State address earlier this month. She and others announced their support for the grant after working with state agencies to ensure that no unworkable federal mandates were included.

Governor Mary Fallin: "After thoroughly reviewing the 'early innovator' grant, I am happy to say that the federal assistance we are being offered is consistent with

our mission to design and implement an Oklahoma-based health insurance exchange. That exchange will empower consumers and help individuals and small businesses to shop for and enroll in affordable, quality health insurance

Governor Fallin Comments on House Committee Passage of Government Modernization Bills

02/24/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today praised the Oklahoma House Government Modernization Committee for the passage of several initiatives to streamline and modernize government operations.

“I’m pleased the Legislature is moving forward with several government modernization proposals. Streamlining government operations, consolidating agencies and sharing administrative costs are all important ways of addressing the state’s \$500 million budget shortfall,” Fallin said. “Each one of these proposals – many of which I put forward in my executive budget - saves taxpayers money while allowing government to continue to pursue its core functions. I am hopeful the House will continue to move these measures forward.”

The House Government Modernization Committee approved HB 1304 by Rep. David Derby that consolidates information technology services of all state agencies under the direction of the Information Services

Senate Committee Passes Governor’s Workers’ Compensation Bill

02/22/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Legislation designed by Governor Mary Fallin’s Workers’ Compensation Study Group and authored by Senator Anthony Sykes and Senator Patrick Anderson was unveiled and passed today at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing. The legislation, SB 878, is a comprehensive overhaul of the current workers’ compensation system and would reduce costs to businesses while maintaining a fair playing field for both workers and employers.

“Oklahoma’s workers’ compensation system is one of the most expensive, least efficient systems of its kind in the nation,” said Governor Fallin. “Unfortunately, it represents a real obstacle to business recruitment and retention and drives jobs out of state. The reforms we are offering today will change that, by reducing medical and legal costs so that employers can spend their money on job creation and business expansion instead of litigation. Our plan creates a system that is fair

Governor Fallin’s Statement on State Revenue Certification

02/22/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement after the state Board of Equalization met to certify the latest revenue estimates. New

revenue figures show the state will have \$106.4 million more than estimated at a previous board meeting in December.

“The revenue estimates certified today show lawmakers will have a budget shortfall of approximately \$500 million to make up during the coming fiscal year which is an improvement over previous estimates and gives us hope the economy is slowly recovering,” Fallin said. “But to make sure Oklahoma fully recovers from the national recession, we must continue to streamline and modernize state government, eliminate unnecessary spending and implement pro-business reforms to attract new jobs and more opportunities for working Oklahomans.”

The revenue estimates certified by the Board of Equalization were enough to enact the income tax trigger in state law,

Governor Fallin Appoints Tom Lee as District Attorney for Logan and Payne Counties

02/18/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Tom Lee to serve as district attorney for the Ninth Judicial District in Logan and Payne counties.

Lee has served as first assistant district attorney in the Ninth District and will replace Robert Hudson, who resigned the district attorney’s office to take a position in the Oklahoma Attorney General’s office.

“Tom Lee is an experienced and tough prosecutor. He brings with him to the office a unique perspective based on his law enforcement career,” Fallin said. “I know he will serve Logan and Payne counties well as district attorney.”

Lee served as a police officer for the Stillwater Police Department and as an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper before joining the district attorney’s office for Logan and Payne counties. In 2010, he was named Oklahoma’s Outstanding Assistant District Attorney by the Oklahoma District

Governor Fallin’s Statement on the Passing of former state Rep. John Bryant

02/14/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today released the following statement on the death of former state Representative John Bryant:

“I was saddened to hear of the passing of John Bryant. John and I got to know each other well when we shared an office suite during my time in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. He was an effective and hardworking legislator and was dedicated to improving our state. He’ll be missed by his many friends at the Capitol. My thoughts and prayers are with John’s family during this difficult time.”

Governor Fallin Joins GOP Governors Seeking Expedited Court Review of Federal Health Care Bill

02/11/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has joined 28 other Republican governors who sent a letter to President Obama asking him to direct the Justice Department to expedite the appeals process of the pending state lawsuits against the federal health care bill. The Republican Governor’s Association will now resubmit the letter to the White House with Fallin’s signature. Fallin had been waiting to sign the letter until concerns over the legal implications to Oklahoma’s separate lawsuit challenging the president’s health care law had been resolved.

“The federal health care reform law is unconstitutional, unworkable and unaffordable,” Fallin said. “My goal has always been to pursue the most effective challenge to the law so it can be overturned and replaced.

“After consulting with my attorney general, I have determined that fast-tracking the other legal challenges to the health care law

Governor Fallin Selects Kim Edd Carter to Serve as Director of Homeland Security

02/10/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Kim Edd Carter to serve as director of the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security.

Carter, a veteran of law enforcement with more than 32 years of experience, will replace Kerry Pettingill as director. Carter currently serves as fusion center coordinator and program manager for information sharing at the department.

“Protecting Oklahoma and its citizens is the chief priority of any governor and something I take very seriously,” Fallin said. “Kim Carter brings with him a lifetime of law-enforcement experience and will be a great help as we work to ensure our state is kept safe from homeland security threats. I’m glad to have Kim Carter serve in my administration.”

Pettingill, who currently serves as chief of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, praised Fallin’s selection of Carter.

“I’ve had the privilege to know and

Governor Fallin Selects Deby Snodgrass to serve as Director of Tourism & Recreation Department

02/08/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Deby Snodgrass to serve as executive director of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.

The Tourism and Recreation Commission unanimously approved Snodgrass' appointment Monday. She will replace Hardy Watkins, who is resigning this month. Snodgrass has more than 30 years experience in marketing and public policy in the private sector, most recently as senior director of public affairs for Chesapeake Energy. In that role, she developed and executed strategic political and public policy initiatives, managed both state and federal political action committees and monitored federal, state and local issues in the company's operating areas.

"Deby Snodgrass will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in marketing, strategy and public policy to tourism," Fallin said. "The tourism industry plays a vital role in our economy and I

Governor Fallin's 2012 Executive Budget

02/07/2011 12:00 AM CST

[Click here](#) to view the FY2012 Executive Budget book.

[Click here](#) to view the FY2012 Budget and Roadmap to Prosperity Summary

[Click here](#) to view the FY2012 Budget chart by Cabinet

[Click here](#) to view the FY2012 Budget Shortfall Solutions chart

[Click here](#) to view the FY2012 Budget spreadsheet by agency

Oklahoma's Path to Prosperity

02/07/2011 12:00 AM CST

"Oklahoma's Path to Prosperity"

By Governor Mary Fallin

Earlier this week, I delivered my first State of the State address as the 2011 legislative session convened. I also delivered to the Legislature a responsible executive budget that strikes a balance between achieving savings through streamlining government services and pursuing necessary budget cuts.

All state agencies must make shared sacrifices this year – there's no way around it. Our government cannot spend money it does not have. But while every agency will be cut, my budget proposes lesser cuts to priorities like health and human services, education and public safety in order to preserve vital services for all Oklahomans.

Cutting government spending this year is just a start. I am also proposing a long-term plan, a path to prosperity, for the state of Oklahoma. It includes important job-creating reforms to our legal

Governor Fallin's 2011 State of the State Address

02/07/2011 12:00 AM CST

(As prepared for delivery)

Lieutenant Governor Lamb, statewide elected officials, Speaker Steele, President Pro Tem Bingman, members of the court, Honorable Senators and Representatives, cabinet members, distinguished guests, and citizens of Oklahoma:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to stand here today as your governor.

I'm joined today by my family, my husband Wade and our wonderful children. Thank you for your love and support.

We are gathered here to discuss the state of the state. I am proud to say, it is strong.

Governor Fallin Declares Emergency as Winter Storm Approaches

01/31/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today declared a State of Emergency for all 77 Oklahoma counties as state officials continued their emergency response preparations for a dangerous winter storm heading toward the state.

Because the latest weather event could include blizzard conditions and possible power outages, emergency management authorities recommended issuing this declaration before the storm arrived so weight and size limits on state roadways could be waived to allow heavy power company vehicles to position themselves across the state.

“The winter storm heading toward Oklahoma has the potential to cause dangerous travel conditions and sub-freezing temperatures,” Fallin said. “This disaster declaration will make sure we can prepare for the winter weather ahead of the storm.”

The declaration provides a formal mechanism for local governments to seek reimbursement

Governor Fallin Selects Dr. Terry Cline as Secretary of Health and Human Services

01/31/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Dr. Terry Cline to serve as secretary of health and human services.

Cline will remain commissioner of the Oklahoma State Department of Health. In his role as secretary, he will serve as the governor’s liaison to health and human services agencies in Oklahoma.

“Dr. Cline is a qualified health care professional and an experienced administrator who is committed to accountability and improving the effectiveness of our state health and human services agencies,” Fallin said. “Throughout his career, Dr. Cline has participated and overseen innovative programs that encourage healthier living and address many of the health challenges that confront our state. I know he will be a great help as we work together to address these issues.”

Cline was appointed commissioner of health in 2009 by the Oklahoma State Board of Health. He previously served as

Governor Fallin Issues Statement on Obstructionist Tactics of State Board of Education

01/27/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement today, after learning about obstructionist actions by the State Board of Education at their first meeting with new State Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi. The Board voted to reject hires of senior staff that Superintendent Barresi had placed on the consent docket, though past precedent routinely has been to have staff working at the department before board approval and often without ever getting board approval. Governor Fallin's statement:

“The public indicated their support of Superintendent Barresi when they elected her to office. She should clearly be able to appoint her own senior staff, especially given that all of her intended hires are well-qualified. My goal as governor, and Janet Barresi’s goal as superintendent, is to improve our schools and help our children. I would hope the Board of Education would join us in that mission rather than engage

Governor Fallin Selects Dave Lopez as Secretary of Commerce

01/26/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Dave Lopez to serve as secretary of commerce.

Lopez is a longtime civic and community leader and currently serves as president of Oklahoma City-based American Fidelity Foundation, a charitable foundation that gives grants for economic development, education, human services and the arts.

“I’ve said from day one, my main focus as governor will be to improve our economy and work to create more jobs and opportunities for Oklahomans. The secretary of

commerce will play an important role in that process,” Fallin said. “Dave Lopez has been a successful businessman and tremendous civic leader with connections all around the nation. He brings a great deal of expertise and enthusiasm to the job and I’m happy to have him serve in my cabinet. Dave is going to join an experienced and diverse cabinet dedicated to moving the state of Oklahoma

Tulsa city auditor is named to state post

01/20/2011 12:00 AM CST

By BRIAN BARBER Tulsa World Staff Writer

Tulsa City Auditor Preston Doerflinger was named Wednesday as Gov. Mary Fallin's secretary of finance and director of the Office of State Finance.

Fallin touted Doerflinger, 38, as a successful businessman, who, as city auditor, has "dedicated himself to ensuring our tax dollars are used wisely."

"Preston has specialized expertise in analyzing operations and extensive experience in budgeting, accounting, auditing and financial oversight of various types of businesses," she said.

"I know he'll be a great addition to our team, and I'm happy to have him serve in my Cabinet."

Doerflinger's appointment is subject to state Senate confirmation, but he can begin work while it is pending. The Legislative session starts next month.

His new state salary will be \$108,000; he was earning \$73,500 as Tulsa's city

Governor Mary Fallin Selects Preston Doerflinger as Director of the Office of State Finance

01/19/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Preston Doerflinger to serve as director of the Office of State Finance (OSF) and as her secretary of finance, a cabinet level position.

As director of OSF, Preston will help prepare the governor’s executive budget as well as help oversee the implementation of the governor’s fiscal policies. Doerflinger currently serves as city auditor in Tulsa, where he leads the Management Review Office tasked with the implementation of the policy recommendations presented by a KPMG study of government services.

“Preston Doerflinger is a successful businessman and, as city auditor of Tulsa, he’s dedicated himself to ensuring our tax dollars are used wisely,” Fallin said. “Preston has specialized expertise in analyzing operations and extensive experience in budgeting, accounting, auditing and financial oversight of various types of businesses. I know he’ll

Statement from Governor Mary Fallin in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

01/17/2011 12:00 AM CST

Governor Mary Fallin issued the following statement today in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:

"On the 25th anniversary of the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we remember and honor Dr. King and his message of equality, dignity and respect for all mankind. We strive to live by that creed, because only by treating each other with respect and dignity can we work together to move our state and our nation forward."

Governor Mary Fallin Names Gary Sherrer Secretary of Environment

01/14/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor Mary Fallin announced today she has selected Gary Sherrer to serve as secretary of environment.

Sherrer, a former state representative from southeast Oklahoma, served as caucus chairman, assistant floor leader and chaired the House Agriculture Committee during his tenure in the Legislature. He served as secretary of environment under former Governor Frank Keating and also was appointed the state's first secretary of agriculture by former Governor David Walters.

"Gary Sherrer brings with him to the job a wealth of experience and I know he's a tireless advocate for all of Oklahoma," Fallin said. "I look forward to having Gary serve in my administration as secretary of environment."

Sherrer currently serves as assistant vice president for external relations in Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. He will

Governor Fallin's Inaugural Food Drive a Success

01/12/2011 12:00 AM CST

Oklahomans Unite to Feed the Hungry; Food Drive Capped with Large Donation from Contractors

OKLAHOMA CITY - The statewide "Feeding Oklahoma" food drive organized by the inaugural committee of Governor Mary Fallin raised more than 20,000 pounds of food and \$100,000, the governor announced today. The food drive was capped off with a donation Wednesday of 9,000 pounds of food from the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors. This food and fund drive, which ran through January 10, will provide nearly 680,000 meals to hungry families and seniors this winter.

"Oklahomans are the most caring and giving people around and they proved it by answering the

Oklahoma AG-elect Will File Lawsuit Against Federal Health Care Bill

01/07/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General-elect Scott Pruitt today announced the state of Oklahoma will file an independent lawsuit against the federal government to challenge the unconstitutionality of the Obama administration’s federal health care law in the coming weeks.

Speaking about the need to file independently, Pruitt said, “There is great clarity for me on the necessary and urgent need to exercise my responsibility to defend Oklahoma’s Constitution against a federal government and president that have gone too far in their overreach of power and

Governor-elect Mary Fallin Names Dr. Stephen McKeever as Secretary of Science and Technology

01/06/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor-elect Mary Fallin today selected Dr. Stephen McKeever as secretary of science and technology.

Gov.-elect Fallin Speaks About Being Oklahoma's First Female Governor

01/05/2011 12:00 AM CST

SHAWNEE, Okla. — In five days, Oklahoma voters will experience a historic moment they made possible in November by electing the state’s first woman to serve as governor.

On Jan. 10, Gov.-elect Mary Fallin, who calls Tecumseh her hometown, will be sworn into office on the south steps of the state capitol in Oklahoma City.

Governor-elect Mary Fallin Selects Mike Ming as Energy Secretary

01/05/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor-elect Mary Fallin today selected Mike Ming as secretary of energy.

Governor-elect Mary Fallin to Retain Alex Pettit As Chief Information Officer

01/05/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor-elect Mary Fallin today announced she would retain Alex Pettit as the chief information officer for Oklahoma.

Mary Fallin's Journey

01/05/2011 12:00 AM CST

Mary Newt Copeland used to ride her bike to Ivey's Grocery, charging her purchases and carrying them home in the bike basket to an unlocked house.

Her dad, Newt, and her mom, Mary Jo, were at work in Shawnee — Newt at the Employment Security Commission and Mary Jo at the Department of Human Services. After work, chances were they'd be off to a youth ball game, where Newt would work the gate and Mary Jo the concession stand. "I loved that," Fallin said. "I still remember the pickles."

At high noon on Monday, Mary

Governor-elect Fallin Names Glenn Coffee as Secretary of State

01/04/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY – Governor-elect Mary Fallin today announced she has selected Glenn Coffee to serve as secretary of state.

Mary Fallin To Be Inaugurated As Governor Next Week

01/03/2011 12:00 AM CST

OKLAHOMA CITY -- State officials are making last minute preparations for Inauguration Day. Governor-elect Mary Fallin and a number of other state leaders will be sworn into office next Monday, January 10.

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